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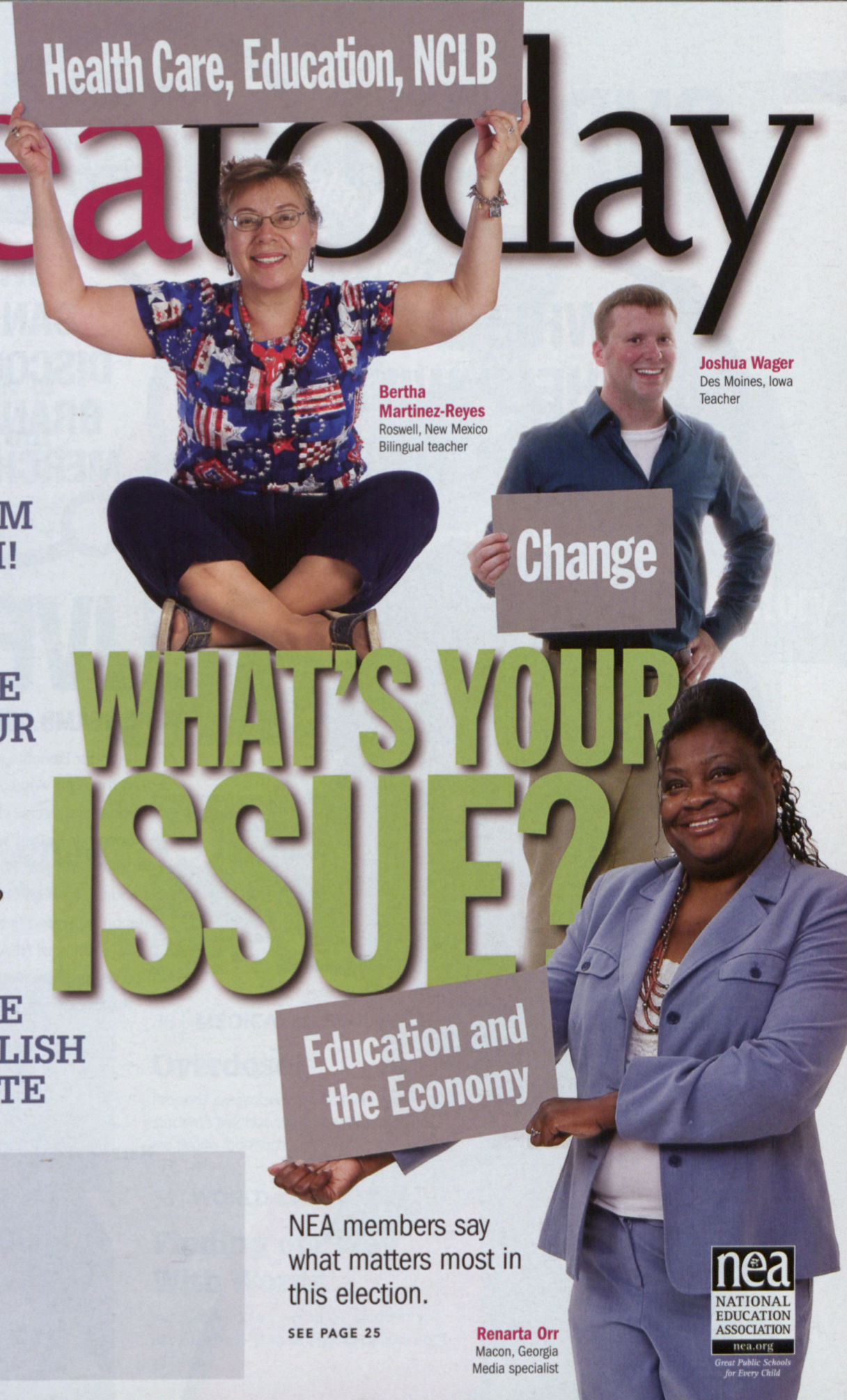
OUR KIDS NEED MORE THAN ENGLISH TO COMPETE



WHAT'S YOUR ISSUE?

NEA members say what matters most in this election.

SEE PAGE 25

Renarta Orr
Macon, Georgia
Media specialist

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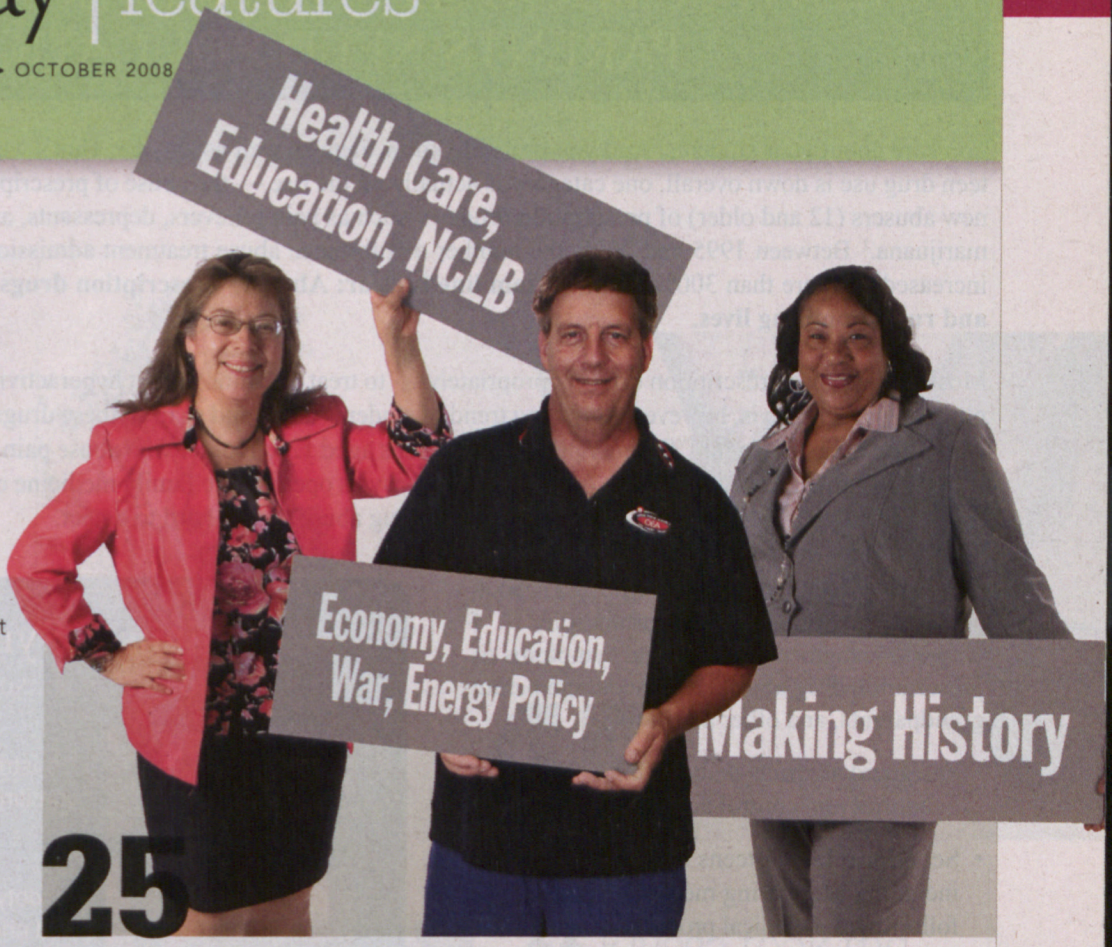

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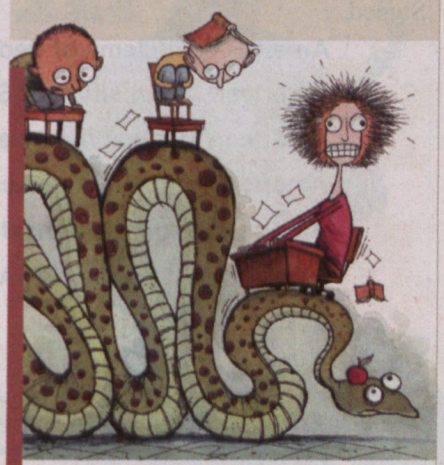

WHEN IT COMES TO TEEN PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE, PARENTS NEED EDUCATION AS WELL.

You care about your students. And you probably know them as well as anyone. That's why you should be aware that while teen drug use is down overall, one category is actually on the rise — the abuse of prescription drugs. In fact, there are more new abusers (12 and older) of prescription drugs — such as pain relievers, depressants, and stimulants — than there are of marijuana.[1] Between 1995 and 2005, the number of substance abuse treatment admissions for prescription pain relievers increased by more than 300%.[2] **The bottom line is clear: Abusing prescription drugs can have serious consequences and ruin promising lives.**

Most students use prescription drugs appropriately — to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety, and physical pain. There is, however, a growing trend of students using and sharing these drugs to get high, often in combination with other drugs or alcohol. Seventy percent of persons aged 12 and older who abuse pain relievers say they get them from a friend or relative.[3] Obtaining these drugs can be as easy as opening the family medicine cabinet, a friend's purse, or locker. And since there is no smoke or smell, prescription drug abuse can be hard to detect.

This problem can be prevented. And as a school professional, you play an important role. Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of prescription drug abuse, and encourage parents, grandparents, and other adults to:

- Safeguard all drugs in their homes. Monitor quantities and control access.
- Set clear rules for teens about all drug use, including not sharing medicine and always following the medical provider's advice and dosages.
- Be a good role model by following these same rules with their own medicines.
- Properly conceal and dispose of old or unused medicines in the trash.
- Ask friends and family to safeguard their prescription drugs as well.

Watch for Signs & Symptoms of prescription drug abuse in your school:

Pain reliever abuse:	Constricted pupils, nausea and vomiting, and respiratory depression.
Stimulant abuse:	Anxiety and delusions, flushed skin, and chest pain with heart palpitations.
Depressant abuse:	Slurred speech, dizziness, and respiratory depression.

For more information on prescription drug disposal guidelines, as well as the risks, signs, and symptoms of teen prescription drug abuse, visit **www.TheAntiDrug.com**, or call 1-800-788-2800.

Signed,

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of School Administrators
American Medical Association
American Pharmacists Association
American School Counselor Association
American School Health Association
Lions Clubs International
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Education Association
Partnership for a Drug-Free America
PTA

[1] SAMHSA, 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (September 2007).
[2] Treatment Episode Data Set, SAMHSA, 1995-2005.
[3] SAMHSA, 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (September 2007).

Office of National Drug Control Policy

PARENTS.
THE ANTI-DRUG.

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PHOTOS PAGE 3 COUNTER CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: MEIKO ARQUILLOS; SANDY SCHAEFER; RICK BALLESTEROS; WADE PAYNE; EMERICO PEREZ

DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly one in eight children suffers from noise-induced hearing loss. That's more than 5 million kids between the ages of 6 and 19.

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL PROTECT YOUR HEARING MONTH. What a great time to teach your kids about hearing and the dangers of loud noise from personal music players and video games.

As part of the Turn It to the Left® education campaign, download these **FREE classroom materials:**

FACT SHEETS – "Did You Know?" fun facts about hearing
CLASSROOM GAMES – "How Loud Is Too Loud?" audio quiz for all ages
TEACHING TOOLS – "Explore Your Ear" diagrams
And much more!

Let's work together to reduce the number of children who experience preventable hearing loss. It might seem fun to turn up the volume now, but the damage can last a lifetime.

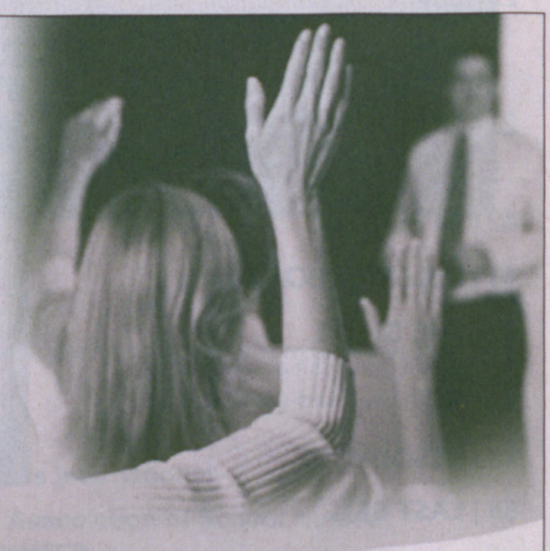
Visit www.TurnItToTheLeft.com for your FREE materials!

turn it to the left!®

A message from the American Academy of Audiology and the American Academy of Audiology Foundation.

During the month of October, receive a FREE "Turn It to the Left" Rap CD and t-shirt. Visit www.TurnItToTheLeft.com to order.

IF YOU WANT TO TEACH, LEARN TO REACH.



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TOP CLICKS

Smile! You're on YouTube

You'd be surprised at what students are capturing on cell phone cameras in your classrooms and posting online. Check out a sample at **www.nea.org/ref?youtube**

The Medicated Child

See the drastic differences from state to state in the percentage of children diagnosed and medicated for ADHD. Find out about the recent upsurge in children diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Most important, learn where you can get help in working with children whose behavior keeps them from functioning in class—and keeps the rest of the class from functioning, too. Visit **www.nea.org/ref?drugs**

Campaign Headquarters

Follow, watch, and participate in the 2008 presidential campaign. For blog posts live from the presidential and vice-presidential debates, visit **www.nea.org/educationvotes**

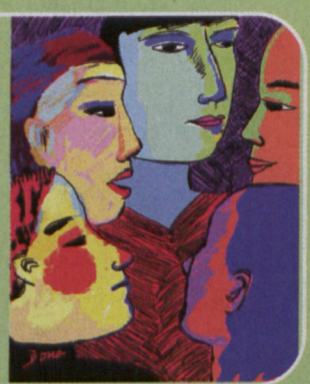
Education Votes

POLL

As a new teacher, did you have trouble breaking into the social groupings among your coworkers? Here's what nea.org visitors had to say. For more on educator cliques, visit www.nea.org/ref?cliques.

SOURCE: ONLINE POLL AT WWW.NEA.ORG

Yes	No
54%	46%



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WORKS4ME
Classroom ideas and strategies

www.nea.org/ref?works4me

NOW YOU'RE TALKING

Why students drop out

One of the reasons my son quit high school in 12th grade was the No Child Left Behind Act and having to be mainstreamed into regular classes because his Special Ed teachers weren't considered "highly qualified."

Is teaching family-friendly?

Some young teachers get the worst schools, the worst classes, and are moved more often. Do they have the skills or support to handle that stress plus a young marriage and children at home?

JOIN YOUR COLLEAGUES IN A DISCUSSION *at* **www.nea.org/forums.**

SMILEY MAN: MICHAEL D BROWN; POLL: PURESTOCK; TEACHER: SOMOS/VEER

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30 Smooth Sailing
HOW TO CAPTAIN AN UNRULY CLASS
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SCHOOL SUCCESS ALONG THE BORDER
Future tense?
It may not be in your hands alone, but here's what you think the future holds.

Perfect Match or Irreconcilable Differences?

I enjoyed the "pie in the sky" kind of story "Two Cooks in the Kitchen" (Try This, September) is. A locally famous psychiatrist, Tom Marrone, an Intermediate Unit consultant, said it best: Whenever you put two adults in a classroom, [teacher and aide, teacher and teacher] you create a marriage. Obviously some marriages work out, others do not. Sometimes for the sake of the children, parents ought to "split up." Perhaps pre-marriage counseling for co-teachers ought to be considered. When it does not work out, the children are not getting the best out of their schools.

STAN LILIENTHAL
Creamery, Pennsylvania

Start from Scratch

Years ago, the suggestions in "When the Ship Sails Adrift" (September) might have accomplished their goals. But nowadays most students cannot be reasoned with. They have their own "agenda" and know they can "rule the school," realizing that there is little if any meaningful repercussions or consequences that they will have to deal with.

My suggestion is to convert all public schools to private schools with absolutely no government interference. These private schools should be managed and taught by ex-marine drill sergeants—in other words, with a no-nonsense approach!

CHET LONNQUIST
Norridgewock, Maine

More Tips for Rookies

It was fun to see the *Ultimate Classroom Control Handbook* mentioned ("When the Ship Sails Adrift"). Here are a few more bits of information that might help new teachers in their classrooms:

- To get students to remember to bring needed items to class, hang a sign saying "Bring reading book" at eye level in the doorway so every kid will bump it with his head as he enters the room. By the time class begins, you can be sure every kid will have a reading book.
- When a child misbehaves and you put his name on the board, rather than tell him how many minutes he will stay after class, say to him that how long he stays depends on how he behaves during the rest of the hour, making the student the master of his fate.

DAVE FOLEY
Cadillac, Michigan

How Could You?

On behalf of all of us who fought the really hard referendum fight in Utah to defeat vouchers, including our fellow NEA members outside our borders who supported us, along with NEA's $3 million contribution, I found myself shocked and dismayed when I viewed my September *NEA Today*. On page 58 there is an advertisement for Overstock.com. The owner of Overstock.com is Patrick Byrne, who donated and raised nearly $4 million to the unsuccessful campaign to impose vouchers in my state. After we defeated vouchers at the ballot box, Byrne said Utah voters "failed the state IQ test."

Why in the world would we allow this man to place an advertisement in our *NEA Today?* NEA needs to turn down his advertising dollars because the money he makes today will be used tomorrow in another state to promote vouchers!

KATHLEEN WAGNER
Hurricane, Utah

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Good question, Ms. Wagner. This was a regrettable error on our part. You're absolutely right. We know better.*

CORRECTION: The map in the poll concerning gasoline price predictions ("Future Tense?") incorrectly spelled Hays, Kansas.

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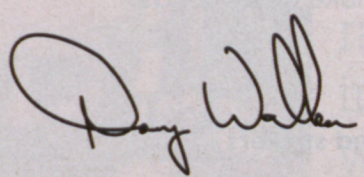
editor's note

TRUST YOUR ABILITY

Introducing his book, *Soul of a Citizen,* Paul Rogat Loeb tells the story of Pete Knutson, a friend and fisherman who objected to the degradation of his working environment, got some people to join him, and eventually beat back a ballot initiative supported by two large corporations. ¶ "It takes energy to act," Knutson said. "But it's more draining to bury your anger, convince yourself you're powerless, and swallow whatever's handed to you." ¶ Many of us would like to see change at some level—the government in Washington or our local school board, the way our coworkers or students are treated, the level of stress in our lives. However, in Loeb's words, "We mistrust our own ability to make a difference." ¶ But we can make a difference—with our vote. Be sure you're registered, and go exercise your privilege. We urge you to vote for candidates and ballot measures the NEA and its state and local affiliates have recommended in support of public education. Vote your own issues and your own conscience. But don't let election results happen to you. Make a difference. Vote.



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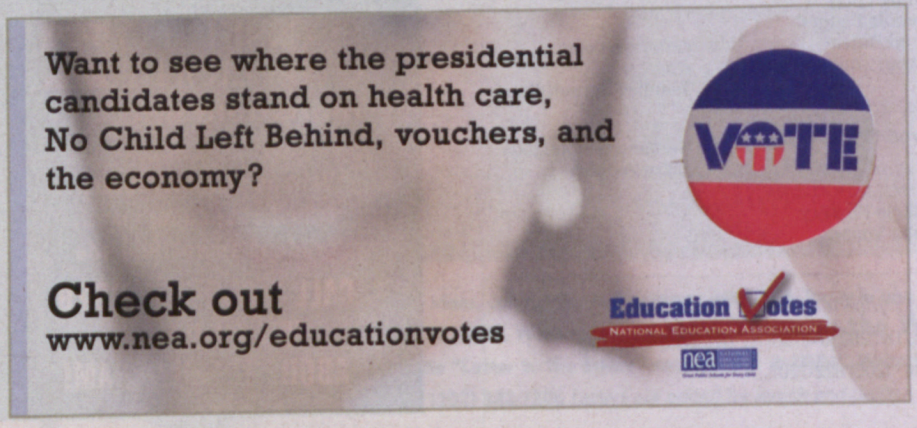
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Our vision is a great public school for every student.

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Our mission is to advocate for education professionals and to unite our members and the nation to fulfill the promise of public education to prepare every student to succeed in a diverse and interdependent world.

OUR CORE VALUES

These principles guide our work and define our mission:

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY. We believe public education is the gateway to opportunity. All students have the human and civil right to a quality public education that develops their potential, independence, and character.

A JUST SOCIETY. We believe public education is vital to building respect for the worth, dignity, and equality of every individual in our diverse society.

DEMOCRACY. We believe public education is the cornerstone of our republic. Public education provides individuals with the skills to be involved, informed, and engaged in our representative democracy.

PROFESSIONALISM. We believe that the expertise and judgment of education professionals are critical to student success. We maintain the highest professional standards, and we expect the status, compensation, and respect due all professionals.

PARTNERSHIP. We believe partnerships with parents, families, communities, and other stakeholders are essential to quality public education and student success.

COLLECTIVE ACTION. We believe individuals are strengthened when they work together for the common good. As education professionals, we improve both our professional status and the quality of public education when we unite and advocate collectively.

DETERMINING THE FATE OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

Last month in this space I wrote about the importance of political action. This month I want to focus on exactly what will be at stake on November 4 when our nation chooses a new President and Congress.

The United States is at a critical point in history, facing many challenges—wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, a new economy that has Americans feeling uncertain, the need for new sources of energy, and a failing health care system. As educators, we know that improving our nation's schools is just as important as any of these other issues.

The first order of business on the education agenda will be to reauthorize the so-called "No Child Left Behind" law (NCLB). Congress began work on this reauthorization in 2007, but it quickly became apparent that nothing would happen until after the 2008 elections.

> "Congressional races are even more important in shaping what NCLB will look like a year or two from now."
>
> —DENNIS VAN ROEKEL

Obviously, the outcome of the presidential race will have a tremendous impact on the future of NCLB. The President will have a bully pulpit to make a case for the kind of bill he wants. Barack Obama believes the law needs to be dramatically overhauled, while John McCain has indicated he would prefer to extend it more or less in its present form.

Congressional races are even more important in shaping what NCLB will look like a year or two from now. A President can only sign (or veto) whatever bill Congress passes. So if educators want to see major changes to No Child Left Behind, we must pay close attention to congressional races.

The most controversial aspect of NCLB has been its emphasis on high-stakes testing. NEA understands that the world today is complex, our schools are diverse, and a student is so much more than a single, high-stakes, standardized test score.

NCLB's emphasis on these tests has been unfair to students and teachers. It has painted an incomplete picture of student achievement and encouraged school districts to neglect important subjects such as history, science, and the arts. Some members of Congress share our concern about high-stakes testing, and they want to incorporate other measures of success, including growth models that track the progress of individual students.

However, there are others in Congress who would put even more emphasis on high-stakes tests by linking teacher compensation to student test scores. We need to support candidates who will resist such proposals.

Another problem with NCLB is the enormous gap between programs that the bill promised and what has actually been delivered. As of today, there has been a shortfall of more than $70 billion between promises and appropriations.

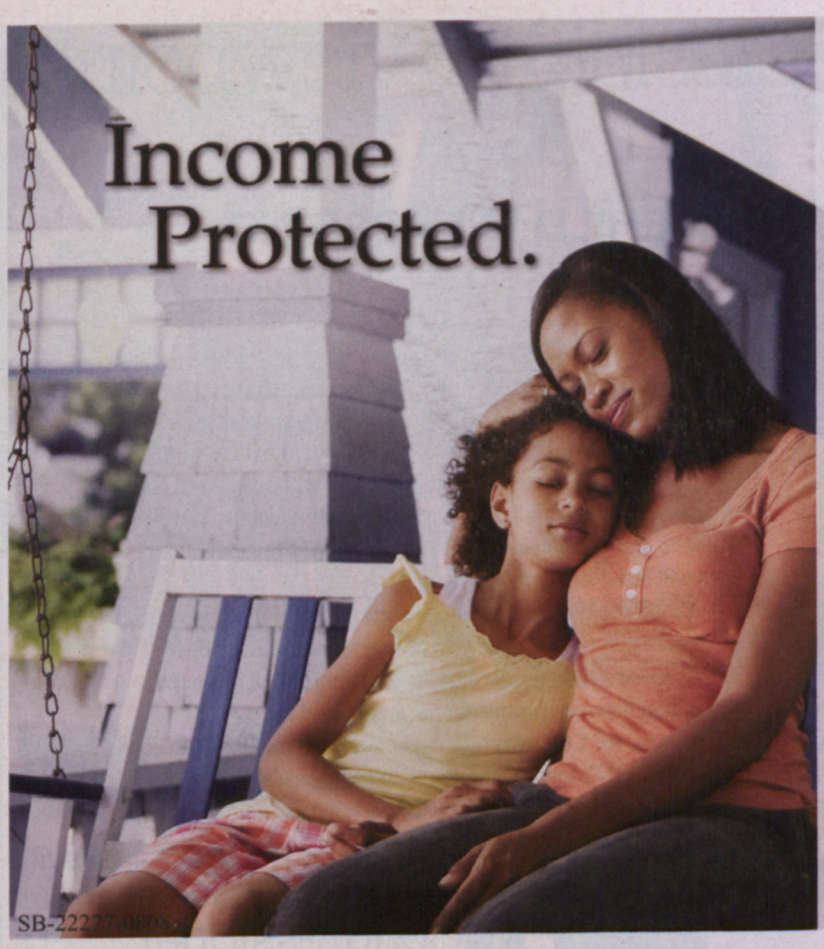
It's time for Congress to put its money where its mouth is. In this election, NEA supports candidates who are committed to full funding of Title I and IDEA (special education) programs, and I would hope that every one of our 3.2 million members will keep this issue in mind when they vote. If we ever want to see more programs like early childhood education, we must elect members of Congress who share that commitment.

Since No Child Left Behind was enacted in 2002, NEA members have consistently pointed out how the law is harming students and suggested ways to improve it. On November 4, we'll have a chance to put our ideas into action. This election will be our opportunity to ensure that Congress makes the changes that are needed, so every child can have a real opportunity to learn and succeed.

Dennis Van Roekel

NEA PRESIDENT DENNIS VAN ROEKEL

PHOTO: MATT HERREBOUT/NEA



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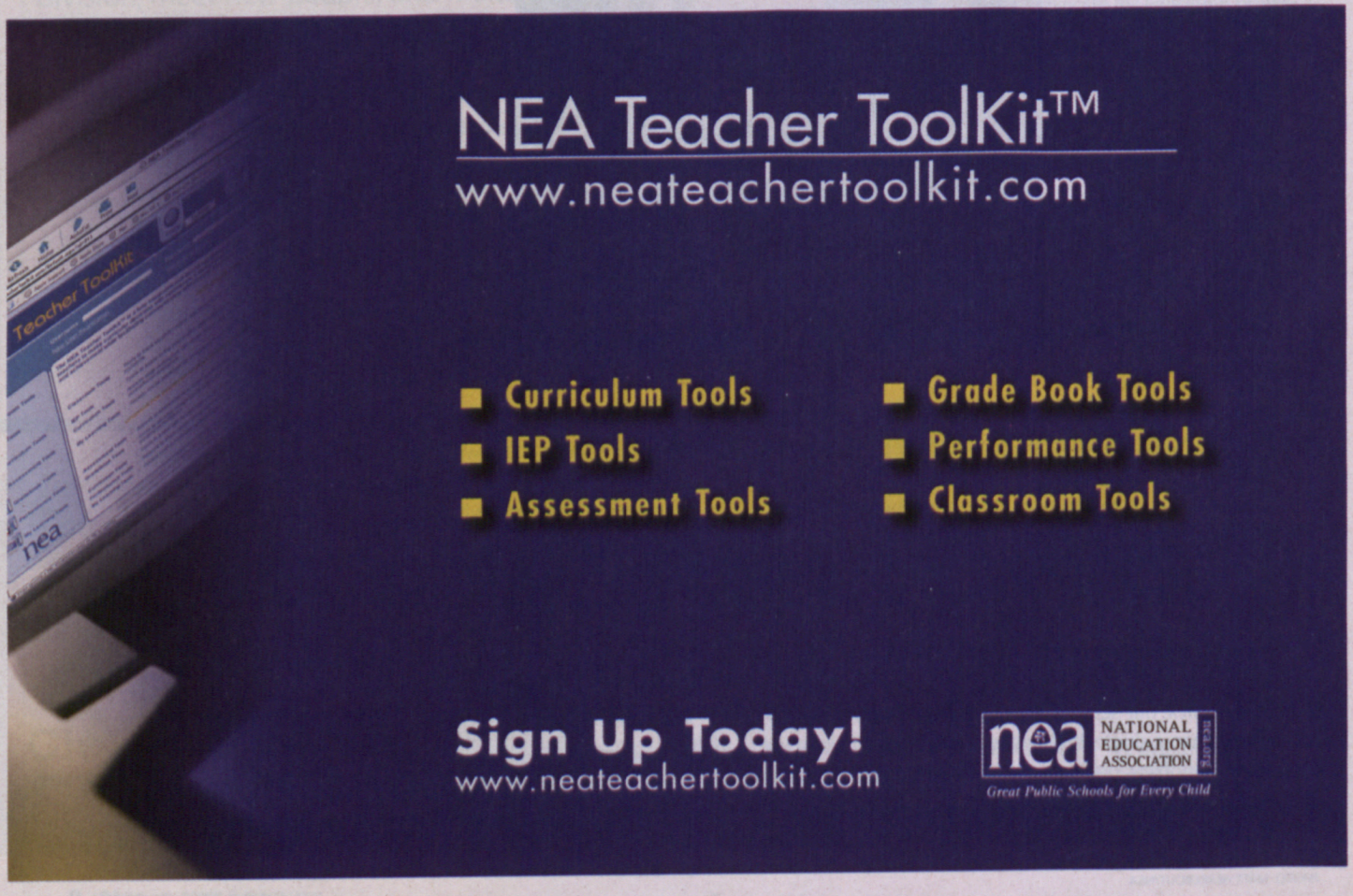

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SHIRLEY HANUSEK, *Santa Clarita, California*

I take a hike outdoors at lunch hour. It helps me keep perspective and I feel refreshed for the afternoon.

SIGRID GRACE, *Rochester Hills, Michigan*

It's never easy when you have the same students all day, but when they go to Specials, I get away for a cup of coffee, sit, and have peace for a few minutes. It's a long walk to the staff lounge, which is usually empty then, so I get exercise along the way.

GAYLE MULLINS, *Fort Myers, Florida*

I'm up at 5:30 a.m. and exercise before school. I go for a walk during my prep, which helps get the good old oxygen in.

ALFRED MASSICOTTE, *Marlborough, Massachusetts*

It's been difficult for me to recharge by taking time out, so I came up with an idea that can take mere seconds, and I can do it many times during the day. I have a picture of my daughter that makes me smile every time I look at it. I also framed a thank you note from a parent that almost makes me cry (in a good way). Finally, I wrote some of my favorite quotes on index cards so I can read one at different times during the day. Here's one of many: "Are you living a life of action or reaction?" Just looking at the photo, the note, and an index card, I am recharged from the inside out.

LAURA SANCHEZ, *Corona, New York*

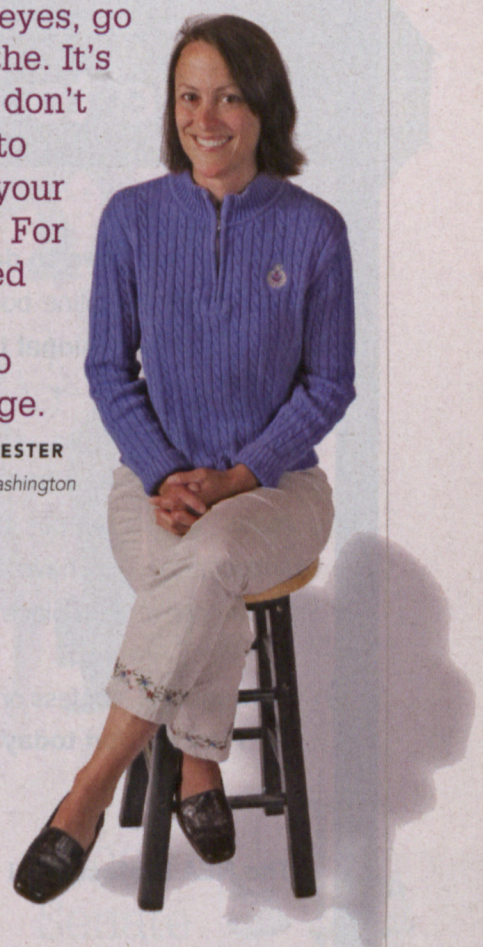
I read my emails from the "Intenders and the Messengers Circle," which gives me valuable insight into what's happening in my life on a spiritual level. I also spend time outside because that nurtures my soul.

CYNTHIA KRITIKOS, *Las Vegas, Nevada*

How do you recharge during a hectic school day?

Sounds simple, even trite, but I find some time without any students around, close my eyes, go inward, and breathe. It's very refreshing! I don't think it's healthy to have students in your room all day long. For me, anyway, I need some time alone, some downtime to reflect and recharge.

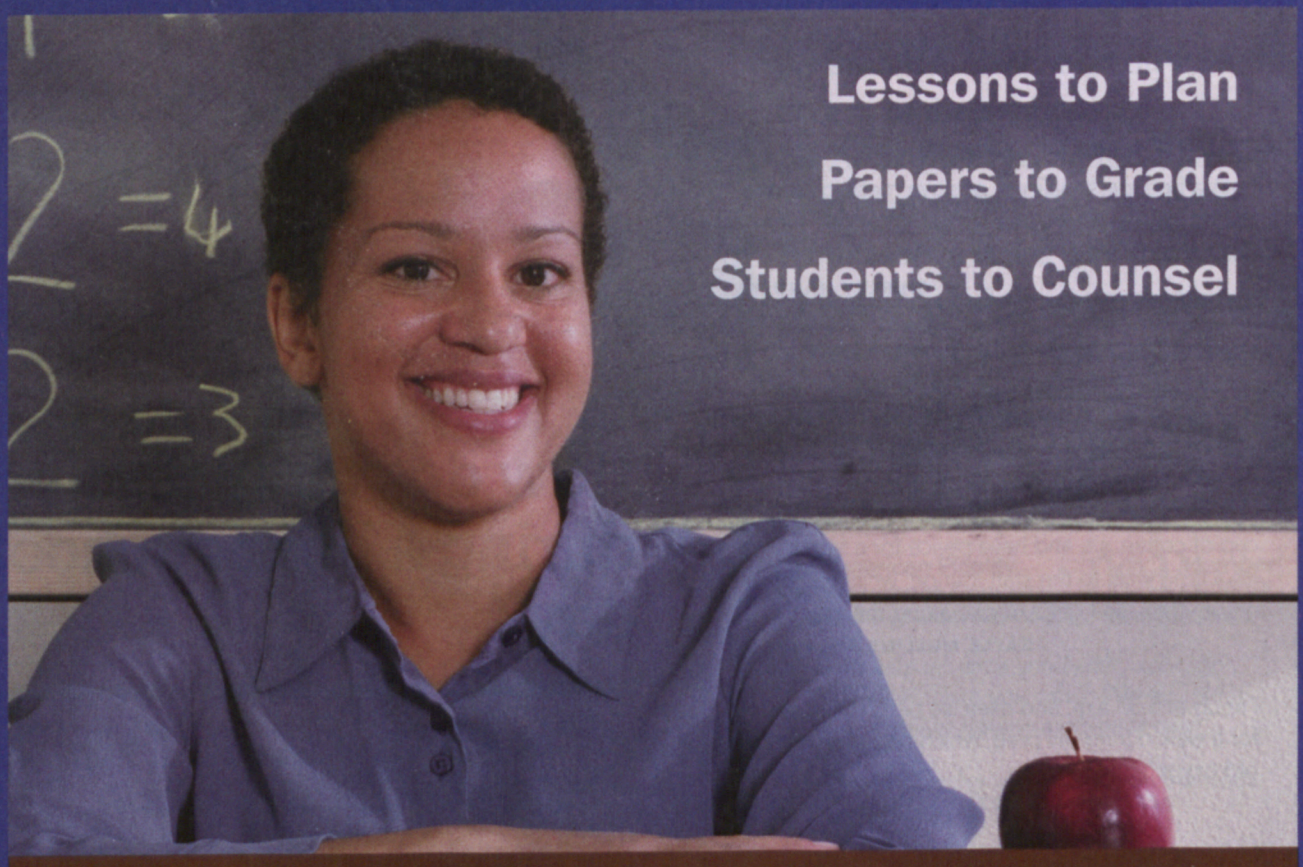
MEGHAN SYLVESTER
Marysville, Washington



What was the best New Year's resolution you ever made?

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! TELL US, IN YOUR OWN WORDS. PLEASE USE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES AND ANECDOTES, AND WE'LL CONSIDER YOUR SUBMISSION FOR AN UPCOMING ISSUE OF *NEA TODAY*. VISIT WWW.NEAR.ORG/FORUMS OR EMAIL CINDY LONG AT CLONG@NEA.ORG.

PHOTO: HEATHER ELSWORTH



Drive to Bookstore?!?

With all you have to do, getting to the bookstore may seem impossible. That's why NEA has developed an online bookstore that contains dozens of professional titles just for you. It's called the **NEA Professional Library**. Find out what's new at the **Professional Library** by subscribing to ***First Edition***!

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Great Public Schools for Every Child

upfront

An ENDA to Discrimination

Little Rock, Arkansas, teacher Mary Ann Hansen, a member of NEA's Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, knows first-hand that gay educators still face harassment and discrimination in their workplaces. A few years ago, Hansen, who is bisexual, found a threatening note taped to the Gay Pride sticker on her car in the school parking lot. Days later, her classroom door was tagged with hateful graffiti. And she's not the only one—many of your colleagues have suffered worse, including being forced to leave their jobs.

WITH STORIES LIKE THAT IN MIND, NEA lobbyists and members will return their attention this year to the federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), a bill that passed the House of Representatives last year, but not the Senate. If passed, ENDA would forbid discrimination in the workplace based on sexual orientation, in the same way that current law forbids discrimination based on race, gender, religion, national origin, or disability.

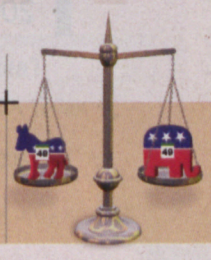
But, in the meantime, educators should consider fighting for their rights through locally bargained contracts. It worked for Hansen, who helped bargain protection for all Little Rock teachers in 2005 as vice-president of her union.

"It helps if there's [GLBT] training beforehand, so it doesn't just fall out of the sky," advises Hansen, who is an NEA-trained presenter in GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender) issues for educators.

"But if we can do it, so can you!"

Digging in **14**

Schools for Chiapas **16**



2008 Senate race **18**

UMBRELLA: PRISM_68, PEOPLE: (LEFT TO RIGHT) SEAN NEL, YURI ARCURS, YURI ARCURS, WIZDATA, INC., ANDRESR, SEAN NEL, YURI ARCURS, ANDRESR, ELENA ELISSEEVA, VGSTUDIO

As temperatures soar, so do spirits.

By 9 a.m., it was 89 degrees—but the only numbers that mattered at this year's Outreach to Teach event in Arlington, Virginia, were the 350 volunteers who braved the heat to help out.

THE ANNUAL EVENT offers NEA student members the opportunity to roll up their sleeves with retirees, support professionals, and active educators, and also to help transform a high-needs school campus with gallons of paint, buckets of seedlings, and heaps of enthusiasm.

"I say it's like Extreme Makeover: The School Edition," said Virginia Student President Sarah Danielson.

Inside Arlington's Wakefield High School, the oldest in its district, under the direction of *Rachael Ray Show* designer Evette Rios, teams of paint-dripped volunteers were transforming the faculty lounge and dining room with donated products from The Home Depot and JCPenney. Make way for the Country Squire Dining Room table, please!

Outside, Oklahoma Retired Educators Association President Joy Dennis took a much-needed break from painting yellow curbs in the school's parking lot.

"Here I am, I'm hot and I'm sweaty and I probably smell, but I'm really enjoying it," Dennis proclaimed. "What we're doing really makes a difference—not only to the students, but the faculty. It's a great morale booster."

PLANTING TREE: SANDY SCHAEFFER

The number of **STUDENTS** expected to enroll in U.S. **PUBLIC SCHOOLS** in 2009–10.

SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

50,000,00

Girls Plus Math Equals Success.

FOURTEEN YEARS after the iconic American girl—Barbie herself—announced to young admirers that "Math is hard!" it turns out that they weren't really listening (thankfully).

A recent study, which looked at 7 million math scores, shows that girls from elementary school through high school do just as well as boys in math. They take as many advanced placement math classes and earn 48 percent of bachelor's math degrees.

"There just aren't gender differences anymore in math performance," says University of Wisconsin-Madison psych professor Janet Hyde, the study's leader. "So parents and teachers need to revise their thoughts about this."

THE CHILD MOMS OF GLOUCESTER

THE PICTURESQUE fishing port of Gloucester, Massachusetts, has become the focus of a national debate over teen pregnancy, with the recent claim and denial that a group of girls, all under 16, promised to get pregnant and raise their children together.

Pact or no, at least 17 girls got pregnant last year at the 1,200-student school, compared with a handful the previous year.

Who or what is to blame? Juno? Jamie Lynn Spears? Opposition to contraceptives? The sinking fishing industry?

Maybe all of them. But here's some context:

The U.S. teen birth rate has fallen by a third in 15 years, despite a recent bump. But it's still dramatically higher than in Western Europe—where teens have better access to contraception and are less poor. Here, the current government strategy is abstinence-only sex education, which a controlled study found doesn't work.

(See www.nea.org/ref?childmoms for more.)

Meanwhile, let's hope the Gloucester girls sell their stories to Hollywood for a lot of money—they'll need it.

MATH GIRL: STOCKBYTE; TEEN MOM: GEOFF MANASSE

+ notepad

PENSIONS IN THE NEWS

Given the choice between staying in a 401(k)-style retirement program or transferring to a secure defined-benefit system, a whopping majority of West Virginia's teachers preferred the tried and true option.

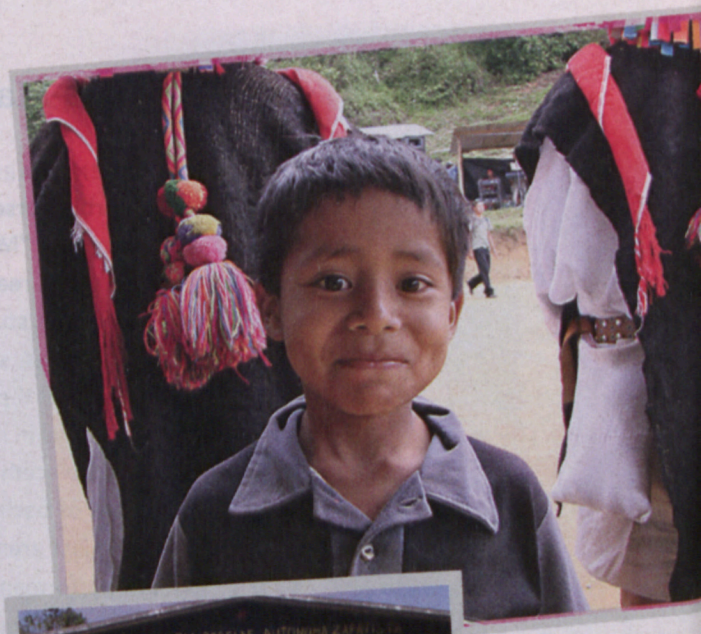
The state Legislature decided to give teachers a choice, after countless in the defined-contribution system complained that they couldn't safely retire on nickels. (There's at least one pending lawsuit, claiming account holders were steered toward bad investments.) It turns out it was a good move for the state, too—they'll get an upfront savings of $22 million, according to the Associated Press, because so many younger teachers made the switch.

In other news, the National Institute on Retirement Security reported this summer that retirees with defined-benefit plans are much more likely to retain their working lifestyle. It expressed concern at the trend toward defined-contribution plans and called for a return to more thoughtful planning. For more, see www.nirsonline.org.

Have a great idea?

Send it by mail: *NEA Today*
1201 16th St., N.W.,
Washington, DC 20036

Send it by email:
neatoday@nea.org



Top: Young Tzotzil student with indigenous authorities during the dedication of the Paul Mann classroom. Bottom: U.S. students volunteer to help with construction.

Building Hope

IN THE HIGHLANDS of southeastern Mexico, in an old plantation house surrounded by corn fields and fruit orchards, there's a photo of an Iowa teacher. It's Paul Mann. This place, the old house, is the new Paul Mann Memorial School, built by Schools for Chiapas.

Mann, an American history teacher who won the 2008 NEA Applegate-Dorros Peace and International Understanding Award, died suddenly in 2006. But during his career, he worked tirelessly to create peace, justice, and educational opportunities for all students, and he helped raise money for this school. Now dozens of Zapatista peasants, mostly teenage girls, are studying their own language, literature, and culture.

Without this place, they probably wouldn't be in school at all, says Peter Brown, a San Diego teacher who has been working with the local Indian school district to turn Mann's dream into reality. But there are still plenty of students with nowhere to go. To donate time or money to the project, visit www.schoolsforchiapas.org.

YOU THINK YOUR GAS BILL IS BIG??

Try filling the tanks of a fleet of school buses.

With the cost of diesel up 35 to 40 percent higher than last year, the fuel budget in Durham, North Carolina, has more than doubled to $3.3 million this year. In Montgomery County, Maryland, it's jumped from $8 million to $14 million. What this means is, school districts all over are looking to rein in their transportation budgets—and their new policies often affect educators' jobs. Drivers and route managers have been asked to cut idling and use mapping software, while teachers have been asked to reduce field trips—or ask students to pay for more of the costs. In some districts, bus routes have been cut, forcing students onto bicycles or into their parents' cars. But the most aggressive cost-cutting measure is the newly popular four-day week, adopted by at least 86 school districts in states like Utah, Minnesota, and Idaho.

CHIAPAS PHOTOS: COURTESY OF PETER BROWN; BUSES: TATIANA SAYIG

Not worth the paper they're printed on.

Nearly 2,000 Washington, D.C., students who used federal vouchers to pay for private schools last year did no better academically than their peers in public schools, according to a federal study. Students also reported no greater satisfaction with their new schools, although parents did. The program, which cost about $12 million a year in taxpayer money, faces an uncertain future in this year's Democratic-led Congress.

$3,600

The average amount of Social Security **BENEFITS LOST** each year by about 300,000 retirees, including teachers, because of the Government **PENSION OFFSET.**

SOURCE: NEA

A LAPTOP IN EVERY KITCHEN

IMAGINE a nifty laptop computer that resists spilled milk. It's got a keyboard especially sized for little fingers—but also all the bells and whistles of a big-time board, like Internet access and a camera. Now, imagine you can get this piece of educational technology into the home of a poor child for less than $180 per computer.

That's the idea behind the nonprofit One Laptop per Child (http://laptop.org), which has distributed its own inexpensive laptop to children around the globe, including rural America. That's smart thinking—30 million American homes, most in poor or rural communities, still lack computers, according to Pew Research, so too many children don't have the opportunity to develop the digital literacy necessary in today's high-tech world.

> global takes

WORLD AIDS DAY

It's time to start planning for the 10th World AIDS Day on December 1. Launched in 1998 by the World Health Organization, the day provides an opportunity for educators to increase awareness of the disease, which has infected over 65 million people and seriously impacted educational systems across the globe. NEA's partners at Education International are asking teachers to spend "One Hour on AIDS" and are providing a tool kit with activities and a poster at their Web site, www.ei-ie.org.

A FIVE-MINUTE TRIAL

Iranian teacher Farzad Kamangar, 33, an officer in his union and a defender of Kurdish minority rights and women's rights, has been sentenced to death by a Tehran court for "enmity against God." Send an online message of protest to the Iranian president at www.ei-ie.org.

Want to share a story?

By mail: *NEA Today*
1201 16th St., N.W.,
Washington, DC 20036

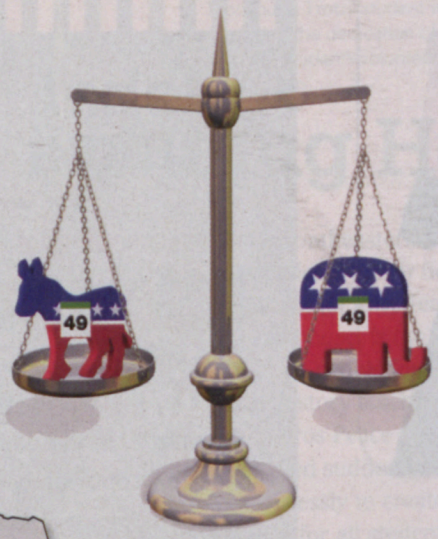
By email: neatoday@nea.org

UNHAPPY GIRL: NATHAN BLANEY, LAPTOP: ERIC FEFERBERG

VITAL STATS

Beyond the White House

The presidential race has claimed so much attention, you might reasonably guess it's the only important match-up in November. It's not. Both parties also are competing for the upper-hand in the U.S. Senate—and the winner gets a real advantage in setting the agenda for federal policies, including education, national security, and economic issues.



OREGON
The Democratic challenger, State Rep. Jeff Merkley, has called for a complete overhaul of the No Child Left Behind law, saying that student progress should be measured by more than test scores and that art and music shouldn't be sacrificed. His opponent, incumbent Sen. Gordon Smith, has a mixed record.

COLORADO
Republican Sen. Wayne Allard has decided to take his F-grade home. He's not running. With that, Colorado has the potential to send a pro-public education candidate to Washington. That's U.S. Rep. Mark Udall, who has earned an A from NEA.

MINNESOTA
Comedian Al Franken may be the best-known candidate for Senate in the country—but that doesn't mean he's going to win. Franken, a Democrat, has been closely trailing incumbent Sen. Norm Coleman, who strongly supports merit pay for teachers and school vouchers. We'll need Al's help next year; right now, he needs ours.

NEW HAMPSHIRE
Republican Sen. John Sununu is seeking a second term. Since he earned a mere 27 percent rating from NEA for his work the first time around—he voted against after-school programs, against more money for Title I, and against making college more affordable—many educators aren't looking forward to Chapter 2. The challenger, former Gov. Jeanne Shaheen, has a real shot at taking this seat.

MAINE Incumbent Sen. Susan Collins, a Republican, has a fine record on public education—but so does her opponent, U.S. Rep. Tom Allen, a Democrat. The difference is, if Allen's elected, the Democratic Party has a chance to create a real majority in the Senate, and that could make a big difference in their effectiveness.

VIRGINIA
Virginia's long-time Republican senator, John Warner, is stepping down—and it's quite possible that he'll be replaced by another Warner. That's Mark Warner, a Democrat and former state governor, who has spoken out against single-test accountability systems. (And that certainly passes our test.)

NEW MEXICO
Since Republican Sen. Pete Domenici unexpectedly announced his retirement last year, this seat has become a possible pick-up for the Democrats—namely U.S. Rep. Tom Udall, who received a 92 percent rating from NEA for his consistent record of pro-public education votes. It doesn't get much better than that!

LOUISIANA Incumbent Sen. Mary Landrieu's voting record on education is one of the best in the Senate—yes to more money for schools, yes to smaller class sizes, and no to vouchers. But, as post-Katrina Louisiana has become less Democratic demographically, she may be at risk.

NORTH CAROLINA This Senate race is suddenly one of the hottest in the country, with polls showing Republican Sen. Elizabeth Dole and Democratic challenger Kay Hagan in a dead heat. If elected, Hagan plans to fix the problems with No Child Left Behind by providing more flexibility and full funding, while continuing to push for high standards for all students.

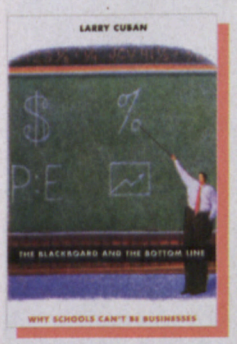
"The No Child Left Behind Act is
It's long, it's complicated, and at the

—NEA'S JOEL PACKER RECOUNTING A

SCALE: ROBERT SPRIGGS, POLITCAL ICONS: HENRIK JONSSON

Book Focus

BOTTOM LINE: READ THIS BOOK



Larry Cuban's book, *The Blackboard and the Bottom Line: Why Schools Can't Be Businesses,* (Harvard University Press) starts off with an anecdote that can't be told too many times. It's about an ice-cream tycoon, who makes the best blueberry dessert in the country, exhorting teachers to do better. "If I ran my business the way you people run your schools, I wouldn't be in business very long!" he scoffs. Then a teacher stands up and asks him what he does when bad blueberries arrive on the loading dock. He sends them back, of course! But you can't send back your students, can you? And that's just one reason public schools can't be run like businesses. In his book, Cuban, of Stanford University, doesn't call for businesses to stay out of schools. Instead, he suggests ways that businesses could make a positive difference in public education—toning down the rhetoric; targeting the most needy schools with positive interventions, like the funding of preschool programs; and reviving their own sense of civic involvement within their companies. "Corporate leaders who look for ways businesses can rehabilitate their scandal-tarnished reputation for self-serving greed, commercial exploitation of the young, and neglect of the common good may well opt for building civic capacity and serving the community," he concludes.

like a Russian novel. end everybody dies.

QUIP, IN THE *WASHINGTON POST*, JULY 3, 2008

Q&A

Irene Duncan-Adanusa

GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE GHANA NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS

This month, as educators across the globe celebrate World Teachers Day on October 5, Duncan-Adanusa, who is also a vice-president of Education International, talks about how we can work together.

What are some of the challenges facing educators in Africa?

The Education for All (EFA) initiative is a huge priority for Africa. [See www.ei-ie.org/educationforall.] But we currently do not have adequate resources to achieve its goal of a universal quality education for all children.

Educators here are also feeling the effects of political instability, liberalized economies and, currently, the introduction of unfriendly labor legislation in many African countries, including Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Nigeria. Human and trade union rights of teachers are always under threat. We have seen this most disturbingly in Ethiopia.

Equity issues are always a priority as well, particularly gender equality. How will women and girls gain access to quality education to enable them to benefit from expansion of national economic growth?

Is it important for education unions around the globe to collaborate?

We are living in a world without distances. It is important for a teacher in the U.S. to understand how rising fuel prices and falling commodity prices affect colleagues in Ghana, in terms of motivation, professional development, and performance appraisals. Likewise, if you're working in a multicultural environment, an understanding of the political and socio-economic backgrounds of the pupils will facilitate a better learning environment.

Why are educators effective as agents for social change?

Teachers, by the nature of their jobs—dealing with human minds—are well-placed to effect change. Bringing about change is basically done through a cognitive process. The target of the change has to be convinced in the mind that the intended change is beneficial to him or her.

In Africa, teachers work in communities where they play varying roles, including priest, counselor, or chief advisor on political and social issues to the community. So he or she transmits information and is the custodian of modernity. As a role model, the teacher affects both the attitudes and lifestyles of his or her pupils and their parents. Thus, in many African societies, teachers are placed highly in the echelons of the society, by virtue of their opinions, though they may not be so highly placed in economic terms.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF IRENE DUNCAN-ADANUSA

leading the way

NEA President Dennis Van Roekel shown here with former Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Carolyn Warner.

THE FUTURE IS NOW

NEA members can influence the fall election and, ultimately, the winners.

Who will win the 2008 presidential election? Whose Administration will NEA work with over the next four years?

In the coming weeks leading up to Election Day, NEA President Dennis Van Roekel says NEA members have the opportunity to affect the political outcome of this election and the future of public schools by doing what educators do best: educate. Specifically, educate political candidates and their staffs about education issues.

"Whether it's about specific policies that could come up in the next U.S. Congress or the reauthorization of ESEA [the Elementary and Secondary Education Act], it's a fantastic opportunity to influence outcomes," he says. "At all levels, [policymakers] are our greatest champions for what our members need."

Van Roekel says members should build relationships with politicians at the national, state, and local levels as a means for not only getting them to understand us, but the other way around as well.

"We sometimes have unreal expectations of politicians," he says, "that they're supposed to know every issue that crosses their desks. That's just an unfair expectation."

Van Roekel is asking NEA members to make an effort to meet policymakers at all levels, including school board members, and establish a spirit of collaboration that looks past the rhetoric, haze, and clutter of politics.

"I see my role as a lobbyist for education as more of a teaching role," he says. "Our members are so good at talking to these folks, telling them, 'If you pass this law in this form, here's how it impacts me in my classroom.' A policymaker needs to know how that law affects the educator."

As for the presidential candidates, they've been introduced to members through their voting records, campaign communications, debates, and biographies. From intense media coverage and scrutiny, educators have learned their positions on the most pressing domestic and foreign issues. From the speeches and interviews during the national party conventions, members got to know the families and personal lives of the candidates, which Van Roekel says is vital to analyzing their views about education.

"It's important that we get to know [the candidates] as people—where they came from, the challenges they faced, and what brought them to this point," he says.

As we have gotten to know the candidates, it is now up to members to help them and their staffs know us, he says. It will be worth it not only to the nation's 44th President, but also to students, schools, and NEA's 3.2 million members.

"There's a whole renewed energy and passion about this election," Van Roekel says. "We have the power to force the change we desire for our schools and our students long after the votes have been counted in November."

> "At all levels, [policymakers] are our greatest champions for what our members need."
>
> —DENNIS VAN ROEKEL

PHOTO CREDIT: MATT HERREBOUT/NEA

LIVING WAGE

Gaining momentum toward fair pay

Last legislative session, the **Iowa State Education Association (ISEA)** won significant funding boosts for K–12 schools, area education agencies, and community colleges. ISEA was successful in getting the following language included in the Iowa Code: "It is the goal of this state that every employee of a public school corporation be provided with a competitive living wage." Following the code change, education support professionals (ESPs) of the **Des Moines Education Association** formed a living wage steering committee.

The **Pennsylvania State Education Association** is collaborating with the **Pocono Mountain ESP Association,** a 519-member local in the northeast part of the state, on a "pilot" living wage campaign in preparation for their upcoming bargaining session. Ninety percent of ESPs in the Pocono Mountain district earn less than a living wage. To garner support, ESPs are sending letters to the editor and gathering signatures on community-wide petitions, which they plan to present to school board members.

In 2006, 400 ESP members of the **Memphis Education Association (MEA)**, without legal bargaining rights, negotiated Tennessee's first-ever ESP contract. The contract established a $10-per-hour minimum wage for educational assistants among other advances. The agreement also provided for salary reopeners in 2007 and 2008. Among MEA's goals this year: a living wage with a cost-of-living provision; wage equity with ESPs in nearby Shelby County; paid ESP training during the hours teachers get in-service professional development; and pay equity among several similar ESP titles.

ROAD RALLY

Campaigning against education budget cuts

A school bus emblazoned with the words "Cuts Hurt" went on a six-week tour throughout California last spring. Teachers, parents, and students met the bus at rallies along the way. It was a show-of-strength tour sponsored by the **California Teachers Association (CTA)**, 340,000 strong, to protest Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposed budget cuts to education. The tour featured a band called the "Tired Angry Teachers" at some stops. At the time, Schwarzenegger's budget proposal for this fiscal year included cuts of $4.8 billion from public education. In response, CTA sponsored an advertising campaign and news conferences focusing on the 14,000 pink slips or layoff notices sent to teachers. The number of actual layoffs was not known at press time. Currently, 52 percent of California's budget is spent on education.

Meanwhile, **NEA-New Hampshire (NEA-NH)** helped defeat a constitutional amendment that would have allowed the state to renege on its constitution's promise to fund an adequate education for every child. The proposal was kept off a fall ballot by a vote in the House of Representatives of 97-238. The legislative contact campaign allowed members to sign a petition electronically and forward a voice message from NEA-NH President Rhonda Wesolowski to their legislators.

CHILDREN AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

NEA members instrumental in election outcome

Through unprecedented grassroots organizing, members of the **North Carolina Association of Educators** helped to nominate Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue as the Democratic candidate for governor in November. More than 200,000 individual direct mail pieces were sent to separate targeted membership groups. Targeted phone calls, emails, text messages and blogging were also employed. Perdue, a former public school teacher with a doctorate in education administration, was instrumental in improving teacher pay.

Report Card

We check out who's making the grade—or needs improvement—in education around the country.

A Missouri Supreme Court/Rockwood-NEA

Rockwood-NEA secured the first collectively bargained contract in Missouri's public schools after the state Supreme Court ruled that teachers and public employees had a constitutional right under state law to collective bargaining.

D Principal Restia Whitaker

After a food fight in the Wilde Lake High School cafeteria in which no student was caught in an infraction, Whitaker offered students $30 for each name of a perpetrator they provided, touching off a heated debate.

D Iowa Gov. Chet Culver

This Democratic governor vetoed a labor-supported bill that would have expanded the scope of issues subject to public employee collective bargaining. A vote takes place after the legislature convenes in January.

PHOTOS FROM LEFT: WWW.YOUTUBE.COM; WWW.GOVERNOR.IOWA.GOV

CLEANING SCHOOLS FOR HEALTH, NOT FOR APPEARANCE

Custodians learn to adapt in a world of budget cuts, green cleaning, and those ubiquitous germs. BY JOHN ROSALES

After 24 years as a school custodian, Pat Nicholson believes he's finally identified the perfect mantra for his job: "clean for health, not appearance."

In practice, this means that Nicholson now spends more time vacuuming carpets instead of buffing tile floors and wiping human touch points, such as door handles, instead of trying to attain a perfect mirror shine on every classroom window.

"Schools are different places today than they were 20 years ago," says Nicholson, who works at Brownsville Elementary School in Bremerton, Washington. "Floors have gone from mostly tile to mostly carpet, student asthma rates have doubled, and custodial budgets have almost universally been cut."

The current school environment demands adjustment from the way custodians do business, says Nicholson, a member of the Central Kitsap ESPs, and an ESP Member at Large Board Director with the Washington Education Association.

They should use non-toxic cleaning products, "instead of the more harmful chemicals that many custodians are still using," and switch from regular cloth cleaning rags to microfiber cloths, which can increase the amount of dirt and germs gathered.

"Custodians are the first line of defense of public health in our schools," he says. "The way we clean can largely determine the level of health for students."

According to NEA research, about 85 percent of school custodians work in campus buildings. Others work in district office buildings and other locations. Custodians make up about 16 percent of the total U.S. K–12 school support workforce. Research shows they are a vital link between clean school buildings, healthy students, and productive staff. A healthy school environment can result in lower absentee rates among students and staff, Nicholson says.

"Lower absentee rates and increased indoor environmental quality also increases student achievement and raises test scores," he says. "Custodians are an integral part of not only a healthy school, but also the academic success of students."

Who says cleaning has to be dull? Custodian **Pat Nicholson** and his tricked out floor scrubber battle germs in school.

Cleaning for health instead of appearance is most critical to the nearly one in 13 children of school-age who have asthma, the leading cause of school absenteeism due to chronic illness. Sofas, bean bags, and rugs are what Nicholson calls "asthma trigger reservoirs," which harbor dust mites, pet dander, molds, and other pathogens.

"Most likely, there are one or more students with asthma in a classroom," he says. "Get rid of the sofa."

Pollutant sources also can be found in some classroom supplies, including those for art and science, vocational arts, and home economic classes.

"Art and science and other projects can cause spills," says Nicholson. "These projects should be located in a single area to minimize the mess."

He also suggests laying down a tarp, especially on carpet and when working with paint. Thick tarps are also handy for those (primarily) elementary school classrooms that act as cafeterias during lunch period.

"With the current low level of custodial staffing in most schools, it is impossible to schedule the kind of cleaning program needed when students are eating in the classroom," Nicholson says, adding that a good way to battle bacteria and budget cuts is "creating awareness about what each of us can do to keep schools healthy."

To acknowledge the contributions that custodians make in schools, the community, and their profession, a custodian awards program has been established by the NEA Health Information Network, Soap and Detergent Association, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The C.L.E.A.N. (Custodial Leaders for Environmental Advocacy Nationwide) Award will be presented annually to a top recipient and four runners-up. Custodians or a team of custodians from one school will be able to nominate themselves for the award. For more information, go to www.neahin.org/programs/cleanaward.html.

"I hope the award will raise awareness of indoor environmental quality issues among not only custodians but all staff and students in public schools," says Nicholson.

PHOTO: RICK BALLESTEROS

NO MORE CLASSROOM PAPARAZZI!

Court: Schools can ban cell phones.

Those of a certain age will doubtlessly remember *Candid Camera,* Allen Funt's classic TV show from the 1960s and '70s that used hidden cameras to film people's often embarrassing reactions to staged scenes.

These days it seems that every kid with a cell phone aspires to be a latter-day Funt, seeking instant fame on YouTube. Increasingly, they're using the classroom as their stage and unsuspecting teachers as their prey.

But can students get away with that? If not, what legal remedies are available to unplug these budding videographers?

The courts are just now beginning to grapple with these issues, but this much is clear: Schools plainly have the right to ban cell phones and video cameras in class, and they can punish students who disobey these rules.

Take the case of Gregory Requa. With the help of two accomplices, the senior at Kentridge High School near Seattle surreptitiously videotaped a teacher in class. The footage depicted a student standing behind the teacher making pelvic thrusts in her general direction.

Later, the students added a graphic announcing "Caution, Booty Ahead," followed by an extended shot of the teacher's buttocks as she walked away from the camera and bent over, set to the rap song "Ms. New Booty."

Requa's video was then posted on YouTube. A local Seattle television station discovered it while investigating a story about students taping teachers and aired the footage on the nightly news.

After an investigation and hearing, school officials slapped Requa and his two cohorts with 40-day suspensions.

Requa then sued the school district, arguing that the punishment violated his First Amendment rights. Federal Judge Marsha Pechman had little trouble disposing of his lawsuit. Among other things, she ruled last year that the "lewd and offensive" video constituted "sexual harassment" in violation of district policy.

Schools need to maintain "a civil and respectful atmosphere toward teachers," she wrote. "[D]emeaning, derogatory, [and] sexually suggestive behavior toward an unsuspecting teacher in a classroom poses a disruption of that mission."

The judge also said the students were properly punished for violating a rule banning the use of "personal electronic devices" at school.

Which leads to the next question: Can school officials ban cell phones from school? Absolutely.

In the first case to address the issue, a New York appellate court last April upheld a broad rule adopted by the NYC Board of Education banning "cell phones" and other "communication devices" from school property.

The school board claimed the right to ban cell phones because they had been used for "cheating, sexual harassment, prank calls, and intimidation," as well as "to take pictures to harass others, including school personnel."

Parents challenged the ban in court, arguing that it interfered with their "parental rights" to raise their children. In particular, they stressed the compelling need to ensure the safety of their children by being able to communicate with them by phone both before and after school.

But the court held that the doctrine of "parental rights" does "not embrace a right to communicate with children by cell phone." While not unsympathetic to the parents, the court said the decision was properly made by school officials.

—MICHAEL D. SIMPSON
NEA OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

NEA: Schools should lay down rules for cell phones

Student use of cell phones in class is a major headache for teachers. Delegates to the 2008 NEA Representative Assembly expressed their concern by adopting New Business Item 2008-67, which reads: "NEA recommends that schools develop regulations for the appropriate student use of cell phones and personal communications devices, as well as other electronic devices, during the school day. Such regulation will promote respect for privacy, intellectual integrity and a positive learning environment."

As these court cases illustrate, NEA members would be well-served to urge their local school boards to adopt comprehensive rules to deal with this growing dilemma.

PHOTO WOMAN: DON MASON; HANDS HOLDING PHONE: PNC; PHOTO ASSEMBLY: GROFF CREATIVE, INC.

NEA Teacher Treasures Series

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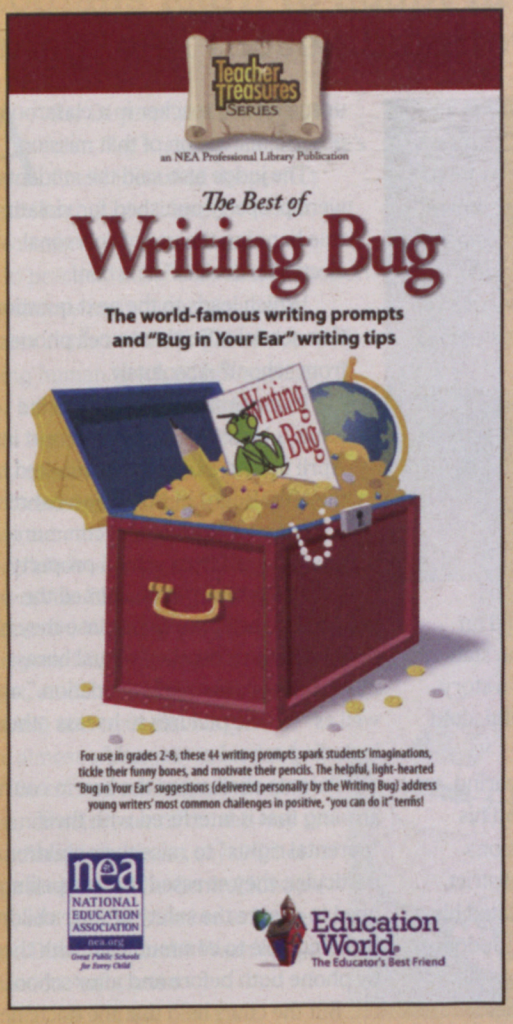
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BY CYNTHIA KOPKOWSKI, SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA, AND JAZZY WRIGHT

WHAT'S YOUR ISSUE?

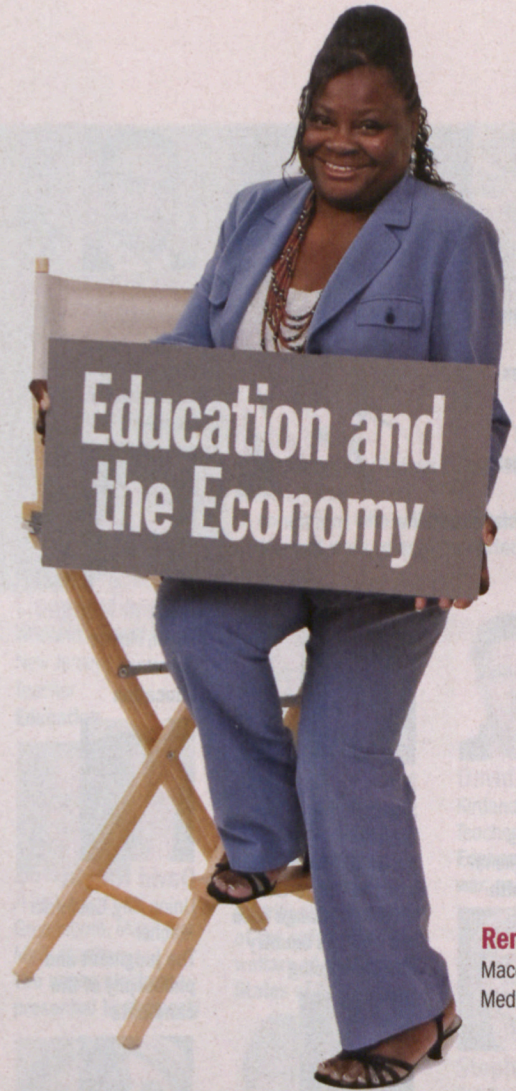
Election Day is around the corner. NEA members tell candidates what they need to pay attention to if they want educators' votes.

By now, the mailbox is jammed with flyers from the campaigns outlining candidates' positions as they try to woo your vote. TV shows seem merely to be filler for the political commercials that air 24–7. And if the phone's ringing, odds are good that it's someone stumping for a candidate. But are the folks doing all the talking doing any listening, too? NEA is. We spent the last few months asking members what the most important issues are to them right now. They shared what will be the deciding factor in how they cast their vote come November 4 in the local, state, and presidential races on their ballots.

Their answers may surprise you. While education was the most popular response, it was by no means the only thing weighing on the minds of educators, education support professionals, students, and retirees. Many respondents couldn't limit themselves to just one, because their concerns are multi-faceted. Like Mary Smiley, a Sheridan, Wyoming, teacher who said she'll cast her vote based on the candidates' stances on education and health care, "and the desire to have a drastic change from the way this country has been going." For Marjorie Gibson of Las Vegas, Nevada, it was the three E's: education, economy, and environment.

With time ticking down, it's not too late for these folks and for you to make a difference on election day. Take an hour or a weekend afternoon in the next five weeks to attend a rally, visit the candidates' Web sites to see where they stand on the issue of paramount importance to you—like public education—or offer a few hours of your time to volunteer for the candidate. (Learn more on how to do just that by visiting www.nea.org/educationvotes.)

Now, let's step into the voting booths with our NEA colleagues.



Renarta Orr
Macon, Georgia
Media specialist

PHOTO: STEVE SCHROEDER

Education, Health Care, the War, and the Economy

Amy Jackson
Chocowinity, North Carolina
Retired; part-time remedial reading teacher/tutor
Education, and the mess the Bush Administration has created for this country—electing people who can get us out of the dire economic and social situation.

Cornelius Roberts
Little Rock, Arkansas
Teacher/coach
How the candidate stands on certain issues

Jeanette Grabner
Clinton Township, Michigan
Teacher
Economy, war, education

Miriam Hodges
Dover, Florida
Secretary
Education

Annette Barnett
Toksook Bay, Alaska
Teacher
Diplomacy and healing, bringing everyone together to do the hard work of educating and providing health care in a meaningful way

Dardon Ann Hayter
Pasadena, Texas
Support professional
Education, health insurance

Mary Smiley
Sheridan, Wyoming
Teacher
Education, health care, and the desire to have a drastic change from the way this country has been going

David Haight
Union City, California
Teacher
The judgment and philosophy of the candidate

Betty Ong
West Bloomfield, Michigan
Media specialist
The war, education

Susan Huttig
Tampa, Florida
Speech/language pathologist
Education

Teresa Paine
Norman, Oklahoma
Reading teacher
Education

Dale Pomeroy
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Support professional
Education, help for families with the mortgage issues

Carla Sparks
Tampa, Florida
District resource teacher
Education!

< Taalibah Hassan
Woodbridge, Virginia
Retired

Betty Madrid
Roswell, New Mexico
Retired
Education and ending the war

Anne Loeffler
Codorus, Pennsylvania
Speech therapist
Education

Gloria Jordan
Macon, Georgia
Paraprofessional pre-K
Education

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ACTIVISM ADVENTURE

Will you be as loud as a fan at the World Series or as quiet as a mouse this campaign season? You may be surprised to know that both methods can be just as effective when it comes to supporting pro-public education candidates between now and November 4. Check out eight great ideas for getting involved, whether you want to volunteer to knock on doors or knock out some emails.

1. Register You can't vote if you're not registered! So make sure your voter registration is current and, while you're at it, take care of your colleagues, too, by reminding them. Helping high school students who are eligible to register is a great step to encouraging involvement in the political process.

2. Plant a sign Some members will have their say without ever opening their mouths. How? A political sign in their front yards. Just call campaign headquarters and ask for a drop-off.

3. Post a note Send postcards to your friends, reminding them to vote and making your case for your candidate. "Dear so-and-so, I'd like you to join me in voting for..." In national polling, teachers routinely rank on the top of the list for trustworthiness, so people will trust your advice! It doesn't matter if you use traditional paper postcards or e-cards, just get them out there in the next few weeks.

4. Flash some cash If you don't have the time to walk door-to-door or the energy to make phone calls on behalf of a candidate, write a check. (Consider contributing to the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education. Visit www.neafund.org for more information. All contributions are entirely voluntary.)

Continues on page 28

PHOTO HASSAN: R.C. KREIDER

Catherine Sigmon-Mitchell
Pinehurst, North Carolina
EC teacher
Education is always a strong consideration, but so is the economy. The candidate's record of experience plays a strong part.

David Presley
Kentucky
Vision specialist
Education

Richard Chilcote
Boise, Idaho
Retired
Education

Donna Morey
Little Rock, Arkansas
Teacher
Health care!

Wil Okabe
Hilo, Hawaii
Teacher
Education, ESEA, war

Barbara Davis-Staley
Tyler, Texas
First-grade teacher
Education, economy, health insurance

Linda Wallace
Woolwich Township, New Jersey
Teacher
Education

Andre Elliott
Yokosuka, Japan (Federal Education Association)
Music teacher
[A candidate] who will help Americans become one nation and work to achieve united nations around the world.

Katrina Ayres
Hillsboro, Oregon
Substitute teacher
Education issues are very important to me, but I also consider other things, such as experience and whether or not candidates support the withdrawal of troops from Iraq.

Karen Babinski
Kearny, New Jersey
Teacher
Education, health care, keeping jobs in the U.S.

Elizabeth Harris
Saint Louis, Missouri
Teacher
Candidates' moral compass, integrity, and my belief that they are not a puppet president.

Cynthia Hanson
Baudette, Minnesota
Teacher
Education and health issues

Alana Turner
Greensboro, Maryland
Math teacher
The entire platform presented by the party

Cathy Koehler
Little Rock, Arkansas
Library media specialist
Supreme Court appointments

Kandi Nieto
Temecula, California
Pre-school teacher
Education will certainly be my top priority, then the state of the safety and welfare of the United States of America.

David Saywell
Kirtland, Ohio
Teacher
Economy, education, war, energy policy

Kay Hansen
Denmark, Wisconsin
Paraprofessional
Education

Stephany Gooden
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Library media specialist
National security

Deborah Platt
Citrus County, Florida
Teacher
Best education plan, best understanding of the average American

Joshua Wager >
Des Moines, Iowa
Teacher
The most important thing to me is change in the way Washington, D.C., conducts business. I want to believe in this country again, and I am tired of the partisan politics that has led this great country down a sad path.

Bertha Martinez-Reyes
Roswell, New Mexico
Bilingual teacher
Seniors' health care, support for public education, keeping only the positive aspects of NCLB.

PHOTOS WAGER: PAULA MAXHEIM; MARTINEZ-REYES: JERRY HOLM

Lois Reed
Gig Harbor, Washington
Secretary
I will base my vote on someone who is honest, cares about America, has values, knows how important it is to fund education for ALL children and will NOT keep getting us in wars.

Clayton Watkins
Wheaton, Illinois
Teacher
National security

Margaret Wong
Marlborough, Massachusetts
Professor
Education

Jana Wofford
Nashville, Tennessee
Student member
I will decide to vote on a President who takes the issues of education, economy, and the war into consideration. I will vote for a President who will fix these three major issues for the American people. The candidate will need to have a plan how to improve education in the public school system for both students and teachers, along with a plan how to improve the economy and the next smart step for the war.

Beverly Gotelli
Kapaa, Hawaii
Retired
Public education, economy

Nancy Davis
Milford, Ohio
Bus driver
Education

Kenn Anania
Brockton, Massachusetts
Professor
Iraq

Pamela Belcher
Houston, Texas
Literature teacher
Importance of education and public schools

Grant Mitman
Butte, Montana
Professor
Education, environment

Patsy Robertson >
Rochester, New York
Substitute teacher
Education and health care. Until we as a country invest in order to provide a quality education for all our children, we will not become the nation we should be. Health care for all—not just for the wealthy and those few who receive benefits from employers—is essential to our country's survival. We must recognize that we need to provide for those who need the most.

Chuck McCarter
Wiesbaden, Germany
(Federal Education Association)
Area director
Total revision of NCLB, defeat of vouchers

Carolyn Henry
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Instructional Coach/Reading Specialist/Adult Ed Program Coordinator
Education

Activism Adventure *continued from page 26*

5. Ring 'em up!

Working the phones at a phonebank is a common campaign chore that may sound intimidating but it isn't. The worst anybody can say is "I'm not interested." Don't take it personally and dial up the next person on the list. They could be the voter who makes all the difference on election day.

6. Party like a rock star

During a hot election year, there's nothing cooler than being a political party animal. You might have heard of young people across the country going to a house party through MoveOn.org or one of the campaigns. Why not throw one yourself? It's simple: If you don't already have a candidate in mind, first head over to www.neafund.org to find someone who supports improving teacher pay, overhauling NCLB, and stopping the spread of vouchers. Then put together a music playlist ("Don't Stop Believing" by Journey or "Politik" by Coldplay, or Neil Diamond's "America.") Serve up drinks with fun political names like the Obama-rama or Straight Talk Sangria. Send folks home with a swag bag with campaign stickers, buttons, and literature about the candidate.

7. Work the polls

Catch up with neighbors and share your local Association's recommendations for candidates at the same time by handing out literature at a local polling location. It's the last time—and perhaps the most important—you'll be able to make a pitch for a pro-public education candidate.

8. Use the buddy system

You wouldn't go to the emergency room alone, would you? Well this election may be just as important to your professional health. So take a buddy, or two, or three, to the polls. It would be especially kind if you considered friends who can't drive themselves. Stop for coffee and doughnuts. Have a little fun while you're making the world better for public education. Vote!

PHOTO ROBERTSON: TONY PIERLEONI

Making History

Debra Askwith
Feeding Hills, Massachusetts
Teacher
Courage, values, passion, and intellect

Laurie Manghelli
Tigard, Oregon
ESL teacher
Education, brains, the environment, pro-choice, social services

Keith Ayres
Hillsboro, Oregon
Teacher
Leadership, direction, and doing what's right (military, education, and all budget priorities). Who will lead us in the right direction?

Valarie B. Johnson >
Miami, Florida
Secretary
This is history in the making for an Afro-American to be chosen as President. Afro-Americans have made great strides in achievements professionally and we have earned the recognition of our contributions to the nation. This is a well-deserved accomplishment, respect that is long overdue.

Cathy Paredes
Tucson, Arizona
Teacher
ESEA, health care, the economy, Iraq

Sue Dickey
Hyrum, Utah
Elementary teacher
Education and the candidate's stance on the war.

Dean Beckett
Aston, Pennsylvania
Math teacher
The war in Iraq

Joshua Brown
Indianola, Iowa
Teacher
Education, Iraq war, health care

Bev Clark
Goshen, Ohio
Teacher
Education, economy

Valerie Dranias
Aurora, Illinois
Teacher
Education and the right of women to choose

Tamra Stokes
Cleveland, Ohio
Teacher
Education is a vital issue that predicts all of our futures. I also take into account the candidate's stance on each of the issues.

Laura Collins
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Music teacher
The economy!!! (and with that goes just about everything else, cost of living, gas prices, education funding cuts, unemployment, endangered retirement accounts, crime....

Sue Smith
Batesville, Arkansas
Retired teacher
Education and health care

Kathy Wood
Rockaway, New Jersey
Teacher
Education

John Lang
Roseau, Minnesota
Teacher
The total overall candidate, positions, experience, etc. Certainly, how he or she views education will be of great importance.

Jason Swartz
Pickerington, Ohio
Teacher
Education, NCLB

Greg Panas
Pompton Plains, New Jersey
Teacher
Education, human rights

Marina Jenkins
Greenville, Kentucky
Special education teacher
Religious beliefs, education goals, and beliefs

YOU'VE GOTTA CHECK THIS OUT

There's so much information (and a hefty dose of misinformation) flying around the Internet this month about candidates and the elections. We clear through the clutter for you at www.educationvotes.nea.org, covering the campaign season from a pro-public education perspective. That's your one-stop shop for learning more about, following along with, and participating in this year's Education Votes campaign. Here's what you'll get with every www.educationvotes.nea.org visit:

BLOGGING. We'll be doing regular blogging between now and November 4, and even live-blogging key events like the presidential and the vice-presidential debates.

SIGN UP TO HELP. Sign up to be alerted when candidates need you to lend a hand in their campaign. This is an easy way to be a part of the action.

EASY ACTION IDEAS. Not everyone has time to volunteer for days on end for a campaign. We'll have a new tip each day for manageable ways to make a difference.

COOL VIDEO AND AUDIO. Come see educators just like you sharing what they want candidates talking about when it comes to NCLB, parent involvement, health care, and teacher and education support professional pay.

PHOTO JOHNSON: PEDRO PORTAL

Smile! You're on YouTube

Millions are sharing videos online. Are you the star of one of them?

BY CINDY LONG

The day his classroom was occupied by test-taking sophomores, El Camino High School music teacher Mark Lowery marched his band class over to the choir room. Since they had no instruments to play, the students were allowed free time to study and hang out. While they laughed and joked with one another, Lowery pretended to fall asleep in the middle of the action, slumping in his chair, chin on chest. It was an innocent joke that got kids laughing, he thought. But one of them captured his prank on her cell phone camera and it wound up on the video-sharing site YouTube.

Then a parent saw the video and reported it to the local media. Then the principal was called. And then there was some explaining to do.

Fortunately for Lowery, no action was taken against him. The principal assured a local newspaper reporter that Lowery, a former Teacher of the Year in his Oceanside, California, school district, is an excellent educator who would never actually nap in class; he was merely kidding around with students. And the one who posted the video realized she had unfairly taken a moment out of context and removed the clip from the Web before more people could view it.

But some teachers aren't as lucky as Lowery.

Cristina Mallon's 15 minutes of YouTube fame made it all the way to network television when a video of her performing a cheer in front of her humanities class aired on NBC's *Today* show. Mallon, who was her Gilbert, Arizona, school's cheerleading coach, was trying to get the kids excited for "Spirit Week." The cheer was captured on a cell phone camera, manipulated to exaggerate certain moves, posted on YouTube, and viewed by millions, including some students' parents. Many claimed the cheer was sexually suggestive,

On a bad day, or even on a good
their patience and take the bait,

others said it was benign, but in the resulting flurry of embarrassing attention and community pressure over the video (as well as a book she had assigned to her class), Mallon resigned.

Welcome to the age of YouTube, where anyone may be armed with a cell phone camera and all the world's a stage, including your classroom. While districts scramble to come up with new policies to regulate the use of digital media, students across the country are busy recording their teachers and posting the videos to YouTube. A search on the site for "angry teacher" returns dozens of videos taken surreptitiously in the classroom.

Sometimes students post videos to expose bully teachers—one shows an angry high school teacher forcing a student to stand for the National Anthem by yanking his chair from underneath him.

of the students made comments about my hair, makeup, and clothing, but being a seasoned sub, I didn't take the bait."

On a bad day, or even on a good day, many teachers would understandably lose their patience and take the bait, especially in the face of wounding personal insults. What's a teacher to do if that moment is uploaded to the third most popular Web site on the Internet? According to YouTube, the site is self-policing, meaning that YouTube relies on its community of users to report improper content. If you want a video removed, you have to set up an account, log on, and flag the video for removal, selecting a reason, such as the video is "Hateful and Abusive" or "Infringes My Rights."

If "Infringes My Rights" is the reason, YouTube requires that you first contact the video contributor through the site's private messaging feature and request that the offending video be removed. If they don't comply, you must then fill out a privacy complaint form.

Flagged content "is reviewed by our staff and usually removed from the system within minutes if it violates our Community Guidelines," says a YouTube spokesperson. The full guidelines are available at www.nea.org/ref?youtube, but the gist is that users shouldn't "cross the line" by posting things like pornography, criminal activity, animal or drug abuse, or graphic or gratuitous violence. "If your video shows someone getting hurt, attacked, or humiliated, don't post it," the guidelines state, which could easily include a video of a teacher being baited and humiliated in the classroom.

The guidelines also state that YouTube "trusts you to be responsible, and millions of users respect that trust, so please be one of them." Problem is, kids aren't always responsible. That's why cell phones and other digital media should be banned in classrooms, advises NEA General Counsel Michael Simpson. He also suggests that schools make it a punishable offense to post a video

day, many teachers would understandably lose especially in the face of wounding personal insults.

Another catches a Connecticut high school teacher jabbing a student with his finger and calling him a "fag." But in other cases, it's impossible to discern whether the videos are of actual misconduct or if they are regrettable moments of a teacher pushed to the breaking point. Sometimes, educators are provoked by students trying desperately to get their teachers to explode just so they can capture the episode and upload it to the Web for anyone to see.

"I don't think I'm on YouTube yet, but I've caught a couple students with their cells out trying to get something good to post," says substitute teacher Loressa Dunn of Eugene, Oregon. "As a substitute, I'm in a variety of classrooms and, some would say, a sitting duck. Proudly, I can say that I don't 'egg on' easily, so the couple of times students tried to get me riled up it didn't work. A few

of another student or teacher without that person's permission.

But the safest course of action is to prevent students from capturing humiliating or damning video in the first place.

"When you're in the classroom, consider that you may very well be taped without your knowledge," Simpson says. "Be on your toes at all times. Always try to present information in a neutral manner, allow students to speak their piece, and do not persuade them to a particular point of view. Never overreact to a student challenging your authority, and don't ever try to personally or physically punish a student."

When in doubt, remember the words of Thomas Jefferson: "Whenever you do a thing, act as if all the world were watching." On YouTube. nea

Send comments on this story to clong@nea.org

SMILEY MAN: MICHAEL D BROWN;
VIDEO WALL: SANIPHOTO; SCREEN PHOTOS: YOUTUBE

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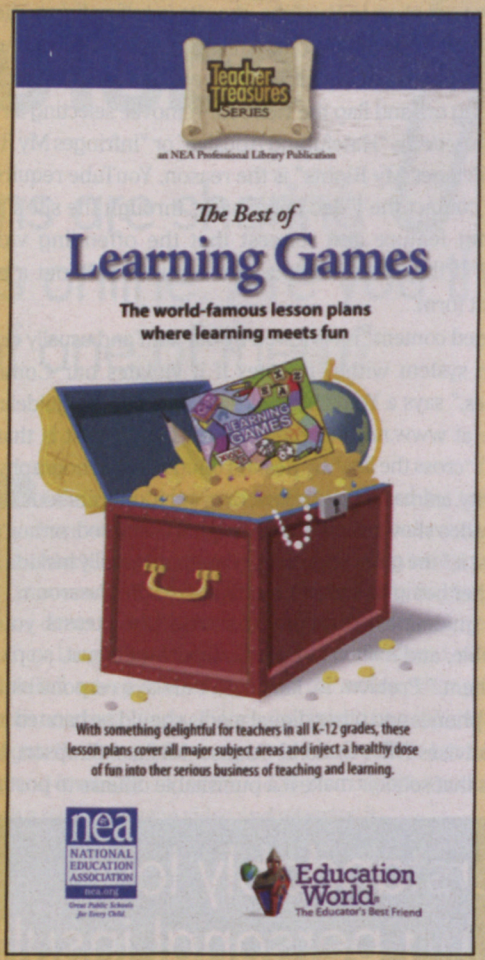
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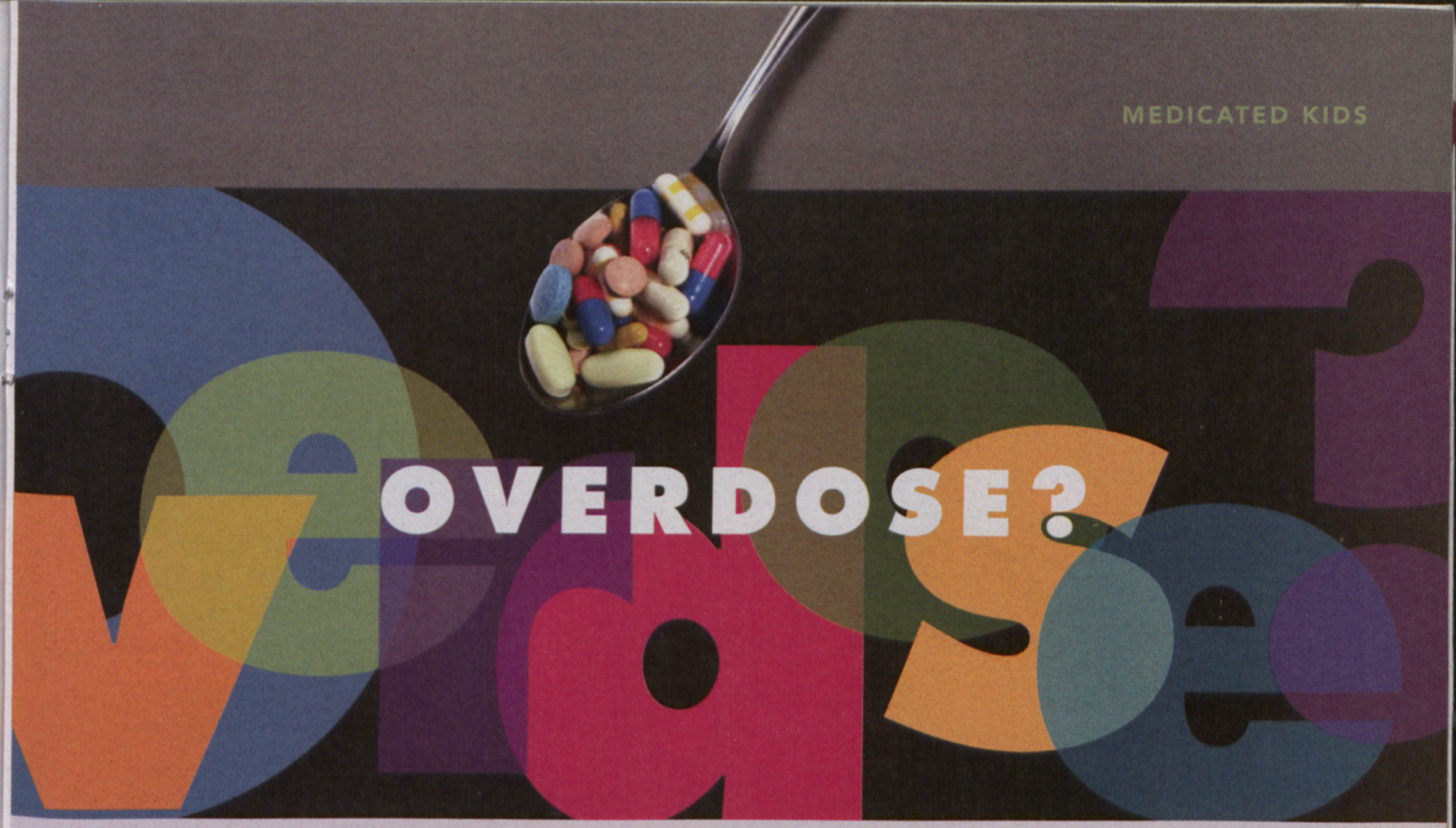


BY ALAIN JEHLEN

Medication can work wonders, but critics believe too many children are taking too much.

It was math time in the Oklahoma City third-grade class and Bobby (not his real name) was supposed to be constructing the number 38 using base-10 blocks to make a physical model of addition. But he was just sitting there. Then he started making a building with the blocks instead of a number. Katherine Bishop, his teacher, constantly had to go back to remind him what the task was. "Finally, he yelled, 'Get out of my face!' and knocked the blocks off the table. I had to take him out of the room," she recalls.

New scene, a month later: same teacher, same kid, same blocks, similar assignment. Bishop still had to remind him of the task, but then he set to work and did it. "I said, 'Well done!' He was beaming. And he got to stay with his friends and have discussions and not get into arguments."

The difference? Bobby had started taking Adderall, a common drug used for attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Statistics on drugs used to change classroom behavior are hard to come by, but informal reports say the number is growing, and in recent years, large numbers of children have been prescribed powerful anti-psychotic drugs with sometimes severe side effects.

The most common reason for medicating children is ADHD. A Centers for Disease Control study found that, in 2003, among children ages 4 to 17, 6.2 percent of boys and 2.4 percent of girls were medicated for ADHD, not counting those medicated for other behavior problems. That's about 2.5 million children. The peak ages were 9 to 12, when 8.8 percent of boys and 3.6 percent of girls were medicated for ADHD.

Just as wheelchair ramps and handicap-accessible bathrooms help students with physical challenges attend regular classes, Adderall and the many other drugs that change behavior have played a big part in moving children who can't control their impulses into regular education.

But there's not always a happy ending.

Take Mark, a fifth-grader with a ferocious temper. "One time, he threw a chair at me," Bishop recalls. His doctor and his parents decided to try Risperdal, a potent anti-psychotic. But he just got worse, starting angry fights on the playground that could have led to serious injuries. Several medications later, Mark's parents, Bishop, and the rest of the team working with him reluctantly agreed he should go to an alternative, more structured school.

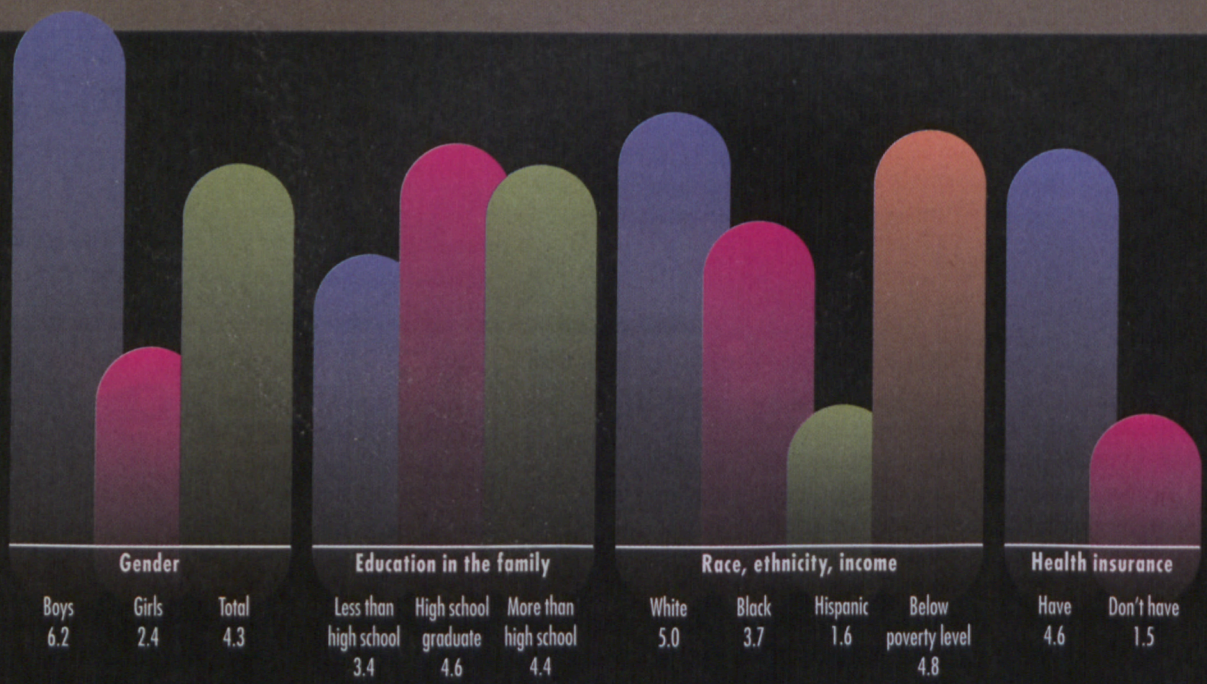
Then there was Tommy, who suddenly had trouble breathing, his lips turning blue. He was rushed to the hospital where he was treated for a dangerous drug reaction.

SPOON PHOTO: NEWPHOTOSERVICE; TYPE ART: GROFF CREATIVE, INC.

MEDICATED FOR ADHD

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN AGES FOUR TO 17 TAKING MEDICATION FOR ADHD AS OF 2003

SOURCE: CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL



Unlike physical aids, drugs that change student behavior have always been controversial. Critics say that drugs are often a substitute for skilled classroom management in school and conscientious parenting at home, and can deprive children of their full range of emotional and intellectual powers—that they leave students "drugged up."

In an informal survey of delegates to last summer's NEA Representative Assembly, some said drugs are over-prescribed. "We have medicated children instead of giving them the skills to correct themselves or improve," said a substitute teacher from Texas. But others disagreed. "I had three students who, without medication, made it impossible for the class to learn anything," said an elementary teacher from Illinois.

Leading school psychologists share much of that ambivalence. "When I see the numbers, I think there shouldn't be that many kids getting medication," says Ron Benner, a school psychologist in Bridgeport, Connecticut. "But when I look at individual children, I think, if it's helping that child, keep it up!"

Benner and Bishop are both members of the NEA special education cadre, a team of practitioners involved in national policy and professional development. Benner is also a leader in the National Association of School Psychologists.

In the last two years, newspaper articles and a television documentary have chronicled the fast-rising use of powerful anti-psychotic drugs prescribed to children for bipolar disorder, which until recently was not thought to afflict children. According to a PBS *Frontline* documentary, a million children have received this diagnosis. The *New York Times* reported more than half a million children are being prescribed drugs that are used to treat bipolar adults, and proponents say the drugs can rescue kids and families in crisis. *NEA Today*'s survey of Representative Assembly delegates confirmed that many teachers see a rise in the number of children diagnosed with bipolar disease.

'Something is wrong with my little guy.'

"Absolutely, there are a lot more," says school nurse Nancy Wells, supervisor of School Health in Manchester, New Hampshire, and another NEA special education cadre member. "It shows courage on the part of psychiatrists who see the symptoms and are calling it what it is. It's a more heavy-duty diagnosis than ADHD, but many parents are relieved to have the diagnosis. They say, 'This is what it is—it's not my parenting, or society, or the teacher's teaching. Something is wrong with my little guy and we can go from there.'"

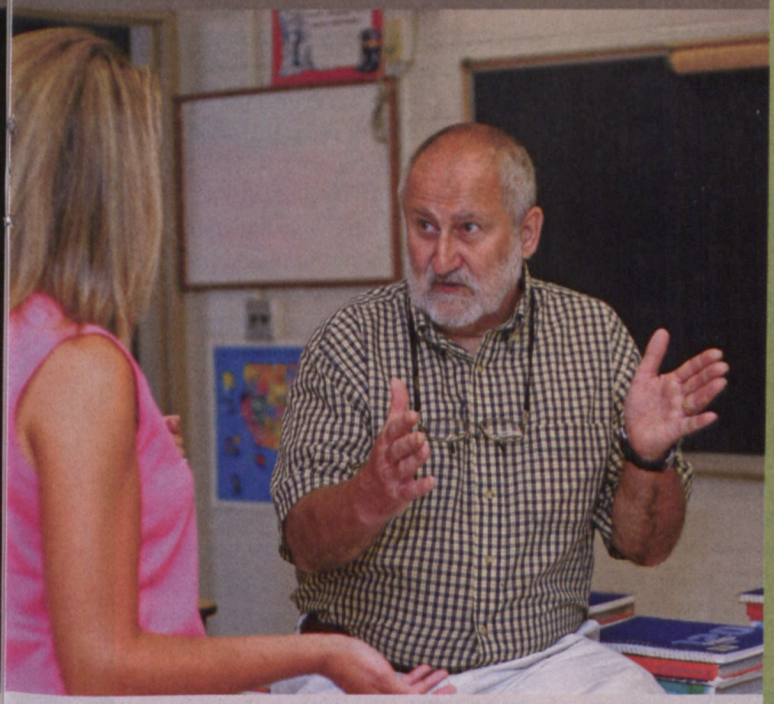
The rapid rise in bipolar diagnoses, however, has set off alarms inside and outside the psychiatric profession. Critics warn that these drugs can have dangerous side effects and have not been tested for safety in the developing brains of small children. News reports reveal that drug manufacturers fund researchers who promote the use of anti-psychotic drugs in children and pay doctors to give seminars for other doctors on using these drugs.

Even if there are real cases of bipolar disorder in children, some educators wonder whether the label is overused.

What's in a label?

"Bipolar is the diagnosis of the day," says Katherine Bishop. "Also autism. Sixteen years ago when I started, it was ADHD. These diagnoses are based on a behavior rating scale that parents and teachers usually fill out. It's not a blood test. It's subjective. And many of these characteristics fall into several disorders.

"I had a student who went to the doctor for one session and, based on a behavioral checklist, was diagnosed autistic. Is he non-communicative with peers? Well, sure, sometimes. But he also



School psychologist **Ron Benner** and a parent discuss her child's progress.

bounces around. So is he hyperactive?

"Sometimes parents don't like a diagnosis and shop around for a different doctor."

Bishop says the diagnosis doesn't really affect her work. "I watch behavior. That's what my services are based on." She has strategies for dealing with children who won't follow directions, or can't sit still, or lose their tempers—regardless of the label.

But the label does have a big impact on a child's life, not least because it affects what drugs he or she will receive.

Despite the growing number of bipolar and autism diagnoses, ADHD remains the most common syndrome for which children are medicated. That diagnosis is also controversial, although ADHD has a long track record and milder drugs are used to control it.

"There's deep-seated suspicion in the Black community about the diagnosis and treatment of any of these disorders, and especially medication," says George DuPaul, a school psychologist and ADHD researcher at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, who works with the National Association of School Psychologists. Because of that, and because many Black and low-income families lack health insurance, says DuPaul, the percentage of middle class White children medicated for ADHD is higher.

Parent suspicions were also behind a Connecticut law that bars teachers from recommending to parents that their child should have medication.

NEA Today's survey of RA delegates confirmed that teachers rarely play much role in the medical decisions. But Benner thinks they should—not in deciding the label or the drugs, but in describing the symptoms. "Teachers make good observers because they have another 25 noses to compare that nose to, whereas a parent may have only one or two," he says. nea

Send comments on this story to ajehlen@nea.org

PHOTO: TINA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY

DOS AND DON'TS FOR OUT-OF-CONTROL STUDENTS

Johnny bounces around, hits classmates, throws chairs.

You're his teacher. You've already tried everything in your bag of tricks. What to do?

Here's advice from psychologist George DuPaul:

First, document the problems. Take notes. What are you observing? What seems to trigger the behavior? Do that for a couple of weeks.

Seek out people in the school who may be able to help—a counselor or school psychologist.

Finally, talk with the family, preferably face-to-face: "I have concerns about your child. Here's what I see." Do it in a nonjudgmental way, not accusatory. The first reaction of the parents is likely to be, "The teacher is saying I'm not doing my job." So keep it factual: "The behavior is disruptive to your child's learning and to my classroom. Do you see it at home? How do you deal with it?" Come up with a plan together.

If that isn't successful, or if the behavior is beyond the point where informal intervention can work, suggest that the parent talk with a physician or have an evaluation at school.

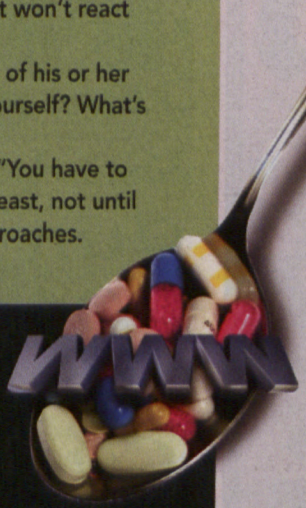
Whether or not the child gets medicated, you will need a strategy. Physicians consider medication successful if the behavioral symptoms are reduced, but that doesn't mean the child is reading better, making friends better, or doing math better.

HERE ARE SOME THINGS *NOT* TO SAY:

TO THE PARENT—"Your child has ADHD and you need to get him medicated." Or, "Your child is not prepared to learn. Something must be happening at home." Even if you're right, the parent won't react well.

TO THE CHILD—(especially in front of his or her classmates): "Why can't you control yourself? What's wrong with you?"

TO THE GUIDANCE COUNSELOR—"You have to get this kid out of my classroom." At least, not until you and your colleagues try other approaches.



ON THE WEB:

Go to **www.nea.org/ref?drugs** for links to reports on bipolar disorder in children, stats on the wide differences from state to state in rates of ADHD diagnosis and drug treatment, and resources from NEA and others on how to help children with severe behavior problems.

FINDING OUR WAY WITH WORDS

ADAPTING TO THE GLOBAL AGE MEANS HAVING A VOICE IN IT. CAN AMERICA'S SCHOOLS BREAK THE LANGUAGE BARRIER?

BY AMANDA LITVINOV

What does it say about America that we are the only industrialized nation that routinely graduates high school students who speak only one language? Frankly, it says that if you want to talk to us—to do business with us, negotiate peace with us, learn from or teach us, or even just pal around with us—you'd better speak English. The fact that we're woefully behind in world language skills has long registered somewhere between, "Hmmm," and "Yeah, so?" on the national priority gauge. (Compare that to our panicky responses to indicators that we're not on top in math and science.)

"The norm is still either no foreign language or two years in high school," says Marty Abbott, director of Education at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. The Council's most recent estimates show enrollment in foreign language programs in the United States at about 30 percent for grades 7–12, and just 5 percent for elementary students.

But the English-only-is-OK attitude

PHOTO: © ICEFIELDS

may be on the way out. A series of wake-up calls relating to national security, diplomacy, and economics—for example, the scramble to find Arabic translators after 9/11 and the struggle federal agencies faced aiding the Gulf Coast's sizable Vietnamese community post-Katrina—elicited voices of concern from the business community, the Department of Defense, educators, and families, all dismayed by our collective ignorance of world languages and cultures.

These new allies join a long-standing contingent of educators and advocates who say it's high time we change our monolingual ways. They point to dozens of programs and ideas, some new and some not, that show America has not only the capacity to produce multilingual, globally aware kids, but also the responsibility. Their ideas seem to be gaining ground, especially in the past five years, according to Abbott.

That's not to say there isn't resistance.

Presidential candidate Barack Obama hit on some deep-seated anxiety when he remarked in July that we should emphasize foreign language learning from an early age. True, he was applauded by the crowd in Powder Springs, Georgia, just as he was cheered on during a February Democratic debate for saying that "America's continued leadership in the world is going to [rely on] our capacity to communicate across boundaries, across borders, and that's something, frankly, where we've fallen behind."

The backlash from critics went like this: *Elitist! He's ashamed of his country!*

"Language is a badge of identity, the heart and soul of any culture," says Shuhan Wang, executive director of Chinese Language Initiatives at Asia Society, explaining the impulse to protect the national tongue. "But learning another language builds a bridge, because we're willing to make that effort to relate to another people."

In the very near future, making that effort will not be optional, to hear some of the nation's top economists, academics, and business leaders tell it.

"The U.S. will become less competitive in the global economy because of a shortage of strong foreign language and international studies programs at the elementary, high school, and college levels," the Committee for Economic Development stated plainly in a 2006 report. "Our diplomatic efforts often have been hampered by a lack of cultural awareness," the report went on to say.

The world is becoming so interrelated, if we don't teach our young other languages and cultural values, says Wang, "We are denying them access to the new world. It is just plain and simple. If we continue to view language learning as for the elite, for the "smart ones," or for the family who can afford to pay for it, we are really widening the gap."

The benefits of globalized curriculum: **Fu Min Qian's** students will enter the workforce with a working knowledge of Mandarin Chinese.

"*Wo zou lu qu shang xue,*" a student responds when he's asked, "How do you get to school?" *I walk to school.*

It's a dazzling California Friday, just two weeks until summer break, but Fu Min Qian's 10th/11th-grade Advanced Mandarin class is doing their teenage-best to settle in and review vocabulary.

"Ta kai che qu shang ban." She drives to work. They sometimes giggle when Qian exaggerates the intonation for them; then they mimic it successfully.

Thirty years ago on this site in South Gate, Oldsmobiles and Buicks rolled off the line at the General Motors plant. What they build here now at the International Studies Learning Center (ISLC)—a public magnet school for grades 6–12 established in 2004—are global citizens. French, Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish are on the list of options at ISLC, whose students are 99 percent Hispanic, with 63 percent qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch.

South Gate doesn't share the crime stats and gang activity that plague other South L.A. neighborhoods, but it's battling a disturbingly high dropout rate (the *Los Angeles Times* has reported the graduation rate at South Gate Senior High is between 55 and 65 percent).

That's precisely why Asia Society's International Studies Schools Network established a school here and in 12 other low-income, minority communities across the country. Foreign language programs are often among the first things cut by urban school administrators desperately adding math and reading classes to raise test scores.

"It's time to reassess what 'basic skills' really means for the 21st century," says Asia Society's Wang. Within five years, the network expects to add up to 30 more

PHOTO: SUSAN GOLDMAN

schools, all providing a globalized curriculum with language learning at its core to prepare students "for college, the changing workforce, and a lifetime of learning as 21st century global citizens."

Back in Qian's classroom there's a scramble for laptops and flash drives for what's clearly the students' favorite activity: sharing their PowerPoint presentations about their families.

"My sisters are pretty," says Sandybell Mendez in Chinese, tucking her long dark hair behind her ear.

"But I'm the prettiest!" she declares as pictures of the three, all beautiful, appear on the screen.

"Learning another language gives you self-confidence, and the teachers here really support you," she says. Like many of South Gate's students, Sandybell already speaks English and Spanish, so she is working on a third language.

Her classmate, Kimberly Vargas, plans to go to Stanford and eventually operate her own business—but, she's quick to add, that'll be after she's lived in China for a couple of years. She earned a spot on a three-week study program to China last year that not only advanced her language skills, but left her enthralled with the country.

Qian smiles when asked about the differences between his American students and those he taught math and physics in China for more than 20 years. Even with classes of more than 100 students, "you could hear a pin drop." His American students? "Much more...active."

He came to the United States because he knew there was a need for math and science instruction, and he took up the opportunity to start up the school's Mandarin language program.

Glastonbury High School's exchange programs let students learn about another culture first-hand. Above, a group of Glastonbury students and their Russian hosts in St. Petersburg.

Enjoying community support and a devoted staff, ISLC will graduate its first class of seniors this spring. Each year the school has averaged a 95 percent attendance rate, and the number of student suspensions fell by more than half even as the student population more than doubled in the first three years.

"It's a special community for teachers, and of course for the students," says principal and former French and Spanish teacher Guillermina Jauregui. "You can practically see their ideas about the world growing before your eyes."

In 1952, the wakeup call was *Sputnik*. The flurry over America's falling behind, evidenced in the Soviets' successful satellite launch, not only marked the beginning of the space race, but resulted in numerous math and science initiatives and Russian language programs. One that still thrives today is in Glastonbury, Connecticut, a small school district that has what amounts to star status when it comes to teaching world languages.

"We have visitors on a monthly basis come see our language program, from other states and other countries," says Rita Oleksak, the district's foreign language director. What they come to realize, she says, is that in making time for foreign language instruction, they're actually gaining an opportunity to reinforce all the other subject areas.

The best case scenario in elementary language instruction, according to experts at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, is when world language specialists are on teaching teams, and can incorporate subject matter the students are learning in other classes in their language lessons. Not only will students learn new vocabulary in the target language, but they get to work on the concepts they need to master for other classes, and yes, for high-stakes tests. That's how they do it in Glastonbury, says Oleksak: "We pre-teach, co-teach, and post-teach what's going on in the elementary classroom."

That's exactly the kind of planning behind this Chinese lesson for first-graders at Fairhill Elementary in Fairfax, Virginia: The class reads *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* all in Chinese (after just nine months of lessons, twice a week for 30 minutes!), then do activities using a SMART Board. The kids reason

out what you get when you add three butterflies plus four butterflies: Seven, yes, but really it's practice in Chinese and math, as well as a reminder that caterpillars turn into butterflies.

They jump into immersion lessons in Glastonbury, too, with all first-graders entering a Spanish class taught entirely in the target language. In sixth grade, they have the option to switch to French; in seventh grade they can add Russian; and in ninth grade they can take on Chinese, Latin, or Ancient Greek. Foreign language is a requirement in grades one to eight, and becomes elective in high school—where an impressive 95 percent of students continue to study a language, and 30 percent study more than one.

"The fact that our students study a language from grade one not only teaches them how to learn languages, it gives them the mindset that languages are just as important as any other subject," says Janet Eklund, now in her 20th year at Glastonbury, where she's one of two Russian teachers. "When we survey [students] about whether they'll continue their language studies, I hear them say, 'Of course, why wouldn't I? I've always taken a language.'"

The school's exchange programs (to Russia, France, Spain, and now China) provide a practical incentive and lots of language practice in the weeks the Glastonbury students spend living with families overseas and hosting students from abroad in their homes and classrooms.

"Our students and their families get to explore cultural differences firsthand," says Eklund. She recalls one Glastonbury family who had a hard time convincing their Russian guest that they owned their home, so sure he was that the U.S. government had given it to them in order to host him. "Back then, the Soviets really didn't know much about how different the role of our government was from theirs," says Eklund. You don't get to have those conversations with a tourist's "Where is Red Square?" language skills.

What the teachers at Glastonbury see—and their visitors frequently comment on—is the highly developed sense of empathy their high schoolers display. And that's as promising for the prospect of world peace as for the future workforce. "All along, we're working to make them not just language proficient, but culturally aware," says Oleksak. "We always remind them that they have to learn more than just the words to relate to people from other cultures."

Eklund has heard from scores of graduates how deeply their language study affected them. "Student after student writes to say these exchanges really changed their outlook, their understanding of the world, and their plans for future studies," she says.

"One of my favorite Russian expressions is, *Vek zhivi, vek uchis'*: Live for a century, learn for a century. We want our students to see themselves as lifelong learners. Like the best learning, acquiring a language is a lifelong process."

Right now, districts like Glastonbury—with an articulated, sequential program spanning grades 1–12, state-of-the-art language labs, and all the support an administration could give—are the exception. Despite the many great efforts out there, like the International Studies Schools Network, such programs are still isolated.

But for every district that reports cutting languages because of the pressures of the No Child Left Behind law, it seems another announces it's establishing an elementary language immersion school or launching a new program in Mandarin Chinese. In fact, a study by The College Board shows the number of school districts offering K–12 Chinese language programs increased from 263 to 779 between 2004 and 2008. That 200-percent growth is due in part to President Bush's 2005 National Security Language Initiative, which funds programs in languages now deemed "critical." The upside is that government is becoming more involved in promoting language study. The downside is that some districts can't support "old-school" languages, like German and French, if the grant money is only supporting Chinese, Arabic, Farsi, Russian, and Korean.

Janet Eklund in Russia? Nope, at a church in Hartford where her students enjoy Russian cultural activities.

Asia Society's Shuhan Wang cautions against a "language of the month" approach for districts working to build their language programs. It's more important, she says, to build on community resources and to do what you can to make language learning real-world and relevant to them.

"There's a Chinese saying, that if three people pass by, one of them is your teacher. We learn from just about every experience we have," says Wang. "Then we make sense of it through our language." nea

Send comments to alitvinov@nea.org.

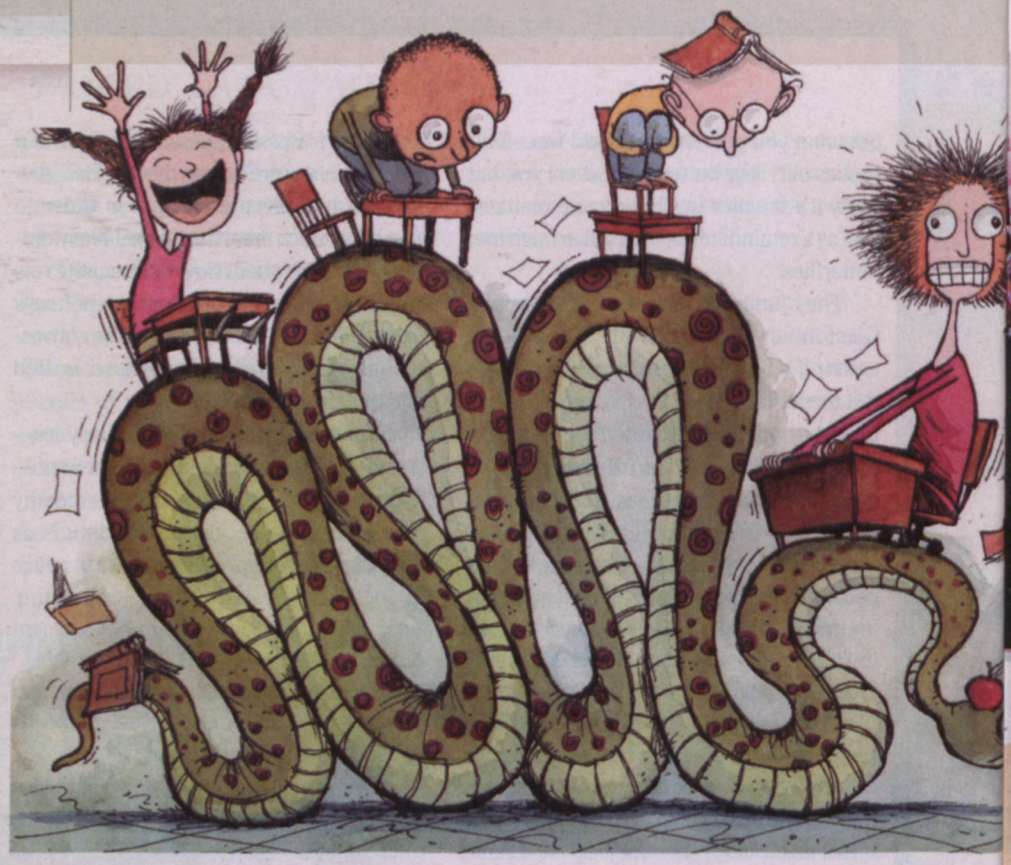
SEE WWW.NEA.ORG/REF?LANGUAGE FOR MORE ON WORLD LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN THE UNITED STATES.

CENTER: © ICEFIELDS; LEFT: JONATHAN OLSON

'SHUT UP!' AND OTHER NO-NOs

Master teachers tell you what they never, never (well, hardly ever) do.

BY ALAIN JEHLEN



Sometimes even a talented educator has to learn the hard way. So it was with Jennifer Locke. She's an accomplished, National Board Certified high school English teacher, but back in 1994, she was a green rookie. "I had no idea about classroom management," says Locke. "I had mostly freshmen, pretty good ones, but occasionally they really pushed my buttons. One day, a student was talking incessantly and trying to derail my lesson at every opportunity. Finally, I left the room crying.

"The next day, they spontaneously wrote me apologies—which I proceeded to shred in front of them (without reading). I was so mad! Later, I realized what a horrible choice I'd made. We all really liked each other. I should have accepted their apology instead of acting like a brat myself."

So number one on our list of no-nos is:

Don't take normal adolescent behavior personally.

"Since that year, I have become as cool as a cucumber in the classroom," says Locke. "Nothing fazes me, so it is relatively easy to manage a class. With experience, you nip off-task behavior before it escalates."

HERE'S MORE FROM ACCOMPLISHED EDUCATORS ON WHAT NOT TO DO

FROM **Glenda Blaisdell-Buck,** middle school library media specialist, Charlotte, North Carolina:

Never back a student into a corner where he will lose face if he follows your directions.

You are dead in the water if you do, and you are the one who will lose face. I remember giving an ultimatum to a high school student and then realizing all his peers were looking at us, and he wasn't going to do what I asked. I can't remember exactly what backpeddling I did, but it was some pretty fast thinking of an alternative that we could both live with.

FROM **Carl J. Clausen,** elementary art specialist, Bellevue, Washington:

Never reprimand a student in front of peers.

So many students have stories of "bad" teachers who embarrass students in front of others. These can be traumatizing experiences they will remember.

Rather than admonishing a student when there's an audience, I will approach that student and, in close proximity, quietly ask, "What are you doing?" [Get a response.] "What are your supposed to be doing?" [Get a response.] "When will you start?"

This usually provides the attention the student is seeking, and it models appropriate interactions students can use with each other.

FROM **Karen Fichter,** ESL teacher, Raleigh, North Carolina:

Never set your expectations too low.

Children have a way of rising to the occasion. They want to be challenged. Expect the best from them and you'll get it!

As an ESL teacher, I often see teachers underestimate what the kids can do. I had several who, within three months of coming to this country, were reading stories in English and could summarize the main ideas to me in Spanish. Meanwhile, in

ILLUSTRATION: DAVID CLARK

science and social studies, they were coloring maps or copying lists of words to memorize. They could do so much more, but the other teachers didn't modify the language so they could understand it.

FROM **Lynn E. Flood,** 21st century literacy coach, Garner, North Carolina:

Never try to calculate your hourly rate of pay for teaching based on your actual effort in your job.

You'll end up depressed.

Never shop for "unmentionables" or "undiscussibles" in the same town where you teach.

Word (and sizes and brands) travel.

Never let them see you sweat.

Keep deodorant in your desk!

FROM **Dan Hutton,** first-grade teacher, Takoma Park, Maryland:

Don't leave an empty plan book on your desk during your first year of teaching.

I ended up being required to turn my plans in to the principal in advance.

Don't leave five minutes before the end of your contracted hours.

(Especially if you have an empty plan book on your desk.)

Don't forget to clamp the top of the python cage.

(Assuming you're lucky enough to be allowed to have a snake in your room.)

All it takes is one time and you have a missing snake. Monty was about three feet long and perfectly harmless (except to mice). Colleagues told me my principal went searching through the leaves outside calling, "Here, Monty... Here, Monty...."

Logic dictated that Monty would have slithered into the nearest dark space, and that's where I found him a week later, in my closet. I took him home after that.

Send comments on this story to ajehlen@nea.org

MAYBE YOU *CAN* SAY, 'SHUT UP'

I never say, "Shut up," to my students. Never. Well, never until after I tell them I love them. When a student is being particularly goofy in class, when I've told him to refocus, be quiet, when I'm on my last nerve, I will lean down on his desk, look closely at him and say, "I love you. Now please, shut up." I use the same tone of voice for both contradictory messages. Soon it becomes a class joke: Any time I tell a student, "I love you," the class chimes in, "Shut up." Then, I only have to say, "I love you," to control that occasional hyperactive, loud student. The behavior stops. No one misinterprets my message: I love my students!

CLAUDIA SWISHER
High school English teacher
Norman, Oklahoma

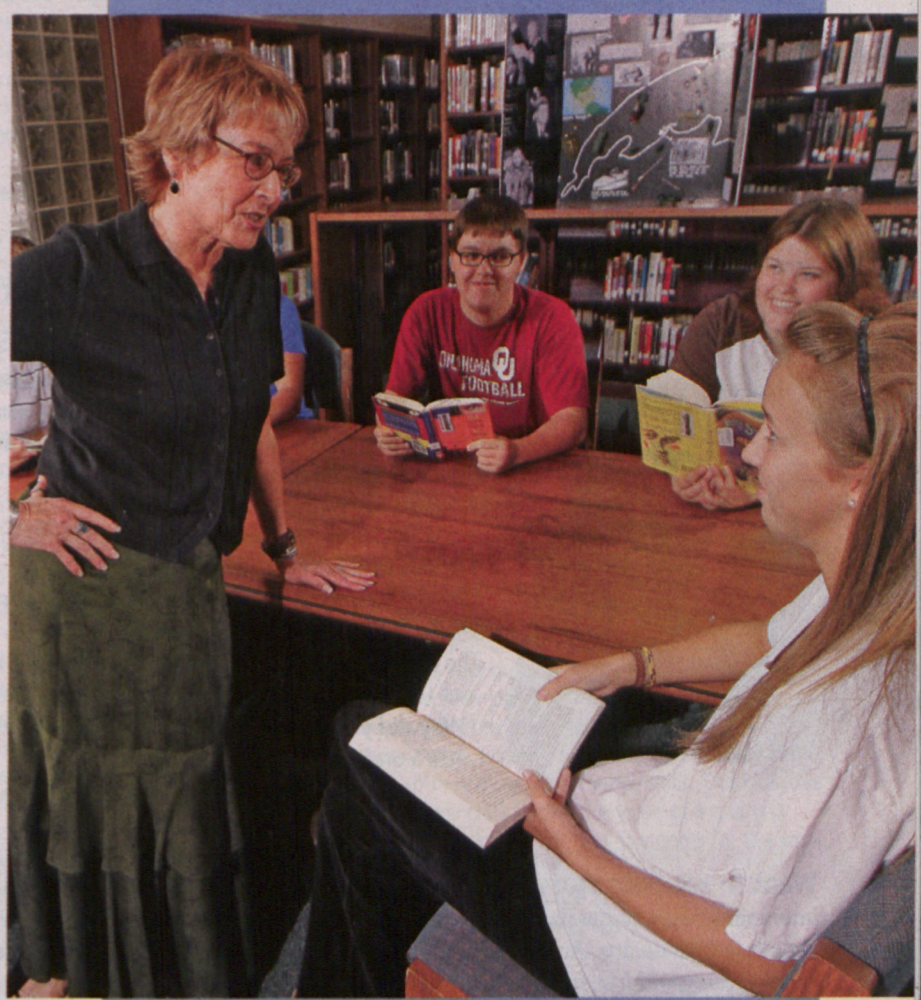


PHOTO: NATE BILLINGS

Manuel Castañeda, III

FT. WORTH, TEXAS

Touring Tex Mex musician,
Middle school band director

How did you end up touring with the conjunto dance band Little Joe y La Familia?
I was playing locally when I was in college and Joe heard us play. He invited me to join the band, but I still had 15 credits left to finish my degree and I knew if I took off, I might not come back. I finished [school] that summer and began teaching and touring with him whenever I could.

How did you get into music?
My father is a band director in Eagle Pass, Texas. That was a strong influence. When I was 14, I got paid $50 for a few hours' work playing music. It didn't seem like work to me.

Do you share your experiences as a professional musician with your students?
I show them photos of the band and how we perform in front of people. I want to motivate them to excel in music and other activities. It takes discipline, teamwork, and practice—skills they can use in other areas. It doesn't matter what they do, as long as it's productive—where they are not just sitting around watching TV.

Have your students heard you play on stage?
A few of them showed up at one of our concerts. They didn't come up to me after the performance, though. They're shy. They talked to me at school. They said, "Sir, we heard you play." That was it.

Why did you join NEA?
Because I feel I need support from an organization that has the best interest of students as well as teachers in mind.

SHORT TAKES

Jim Ellis

SPRINGFIELD, OREGON

Snowboard instructor, firefighter, EMT,
Middle school teacher

How did you get into snowboarding?
A friend bought me a three-trip package to try it out.

Why snowboarding over skiing?
Snowboarding's easier on your knees and I couldn't ski.

Why did you decide to teach EMT and CPR classes?
I like to pass along life-saving knowledge to others.

What's harder to teach—sixth grade, snowboarding, or life-saving?
The hardest to teach is the one where the student is not excited to learn. I've had unmotivated students in all three.

Do kids or adults learn faster?
Both are quick with an excellent teacher's great instruction.

What's the best part about teaching?
The moment of connection the student has with a concept or skill I am trying to convey. It's a goosebump moment for me.

Why did you decide to become an NEA member?
It is a great union of my peers.

—SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA

Linda Coffman

TIFFIN, OHIO

Puzzle designer

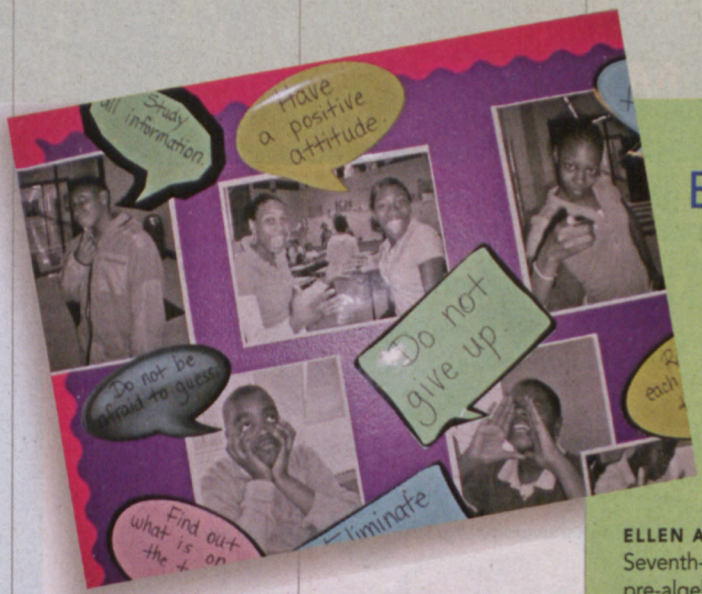
At first, the popular number puzzle Sudoku was just a way for Coffman (Ohio Education Association-Retired) to pass time. Lately, it's an addictive hobby. Shortly after solving her first puzzle, she began making her own. The former sixth-grade teacher spends anywhere from an hour to several days on a puzzle. "Sometimes I ask myself why I'm doing this," says Coffman. "Then I remember: because it's fun! It keeps my mind agile." Her focus now is on making word puzzles for her 15 grandchildren, each one incorporating one of their names.

—JAZZY WRIGHT

Want to see your story on this page? We're looking for members with unique hobbies or interesting ways of passing their time. Drop us a line about your pursuits outside the classroom at ckopkowski@nea.org. And visit www.nea.org/neatoday to print out one of Linda Coffman's Sudoku puzzles designed just for NEA members. It's free!

We Want You!

PHOTOS: TOP: EMERICO PEREZ; BOTTOM LEFT: COURTESY OF LINDA COFFMAN; BOTTOM RIGHT: BRUCE BERG



BEST BOARDS

When we prepare for our standardized tests, we remind students what to do and what not to do on tests. But sometimes things go in one ear and out the other, so I created a bulletin board where the students gave the tips in a humorous way. I had no idea it would get so much attention, but it became a popular bulletin board for kids to stop and actually read. All you have to do is take pictures of students and use message bubbles to fill with anything you want or need them to retain. We are going to use these boards at the beginning of next year to give tips from the previous year's kids on how to be successful in each grade.

ELLEN AUSTIN
Seventh-grade
pre-algebra teacher
Memphis, Tennessee

BOOSTING YOUR WALL OF FAMERS

I teach at a school that struggles to achieve academic success. I post students' names after each unit test for those who do very well on a Wall of Fame. Students love coming in after a test and seeing if their name is on the wall. Other students like looking over the names to see who does well in other classes. It gives many students motivation to see their name posted publicly. If they earn 100 percent, I add "PERFECT!" and a sticker under their name. It has helped create a more positive environment in my classroom.

MYA CARUSO
High school math teacher
Hawthorne, California

SEND IT IN

WE WANT TO HELP WITH YOUR CLASSROOM CONUNDRUMS!

Submit your classroom queries at **www.nea.org/works4me/sendtip.html** and we'll print them so your fellow NEA members can suggest solutions. Sign up for our weekly tips email, Works4Me, by sending the message "subscribe Works4Me" (without the quotation marks) to Lyris @list.nea.org.

TOP TIPS

Oh What a Knight

I knight my students to encourage them to get along with others and focus on positive behavior. I dub all deserving students with my "scepter" pointer stick. The class discusses the reason for a student's entrance into knighthood and that student vows to continue the knightly actions. Those can range from helping other students to improving classwork. The knights fill in their shields that are displayed for all to see. All the knights have meetings at the Round Table where I read them excerpts from King Arthur and Sir Lancelot tales.

ROCHELLE GEALT
Ninth-grade reading teacher
Camden, New Jersey

Practice Time

In my school, each classroom has a digital display on one wall and a regular analog clock on another. In the beginning of the year, I tape card stock over the digital display. Whenever we begin our math pages, I challenge students to write their name, date, and time on their papers. Once some have recorded a time, I ask for an answer. I write the correct answer on the board, so those who don't know can copy it, and those who've made a mistake can correct it. Since this is a daily occurrence, most students have a fairly good knowledge of telling time to the minute before they leave my class.

ROSEMARY BRUCKNER
Second-grade teacher
Plainfield, Illinois

"Field trip"? Actually, due to budget cuts, this is now our classroom.

Behavior Bank

I use a behavior system that also teaches money skills. At the beginning of the year I have all students punch out their money from the back of their math book to go in our classroom bank. Every morning two "bankers" pass out five pennies to each student. If a student breaks a rule, I don't need to lecture. I just collect a penny or two. The children get the message very quickly. At the end of the day, the children trade in their pennies for nickels, dimes, or quarters. Once a week, they come to my "store" to purchase stickers, bookmarks, posters, etc. They may not use pennies to shop so they must learn money skills. The kids love it and my class knows the value of a quarter. Parents donate some of the items for the store.

DEBBY KLOCK
Second-grade teacher
Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin

PHOTOS: TOP: ELLEN AUSTIN; MYA CARUSO
CARTOON: ALEJANDRO YEGROS; KNIGHT: DIGITAL VISION; MONEY: WWW.WUNDERGROUND.COM

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SPENDING WISELY

Sometimes you have to pay more to get the best deal.

BY JENNIFER BARNETT REED

Cary Grant's father said it, and your mother probably did, too: It's better to have one good pair of shoes than four bad ones. It may be tempting to ignore that advice in the face of dire economic forecasts and TV talking heads who advise us to eat store-brand Ramen noodles so we can build up that six-month cash reserve account, but the truth is, sometimes it doesn't pay to be frugal. With the goal of helping you know when to spend, and when not to, here are a few examples:

SHOES. At the risk of helping you justify those $120 Dansko clogs, when it comes to your feet, you won't regret shelling out a few extra dollars on a quality pair of shoes. A cheap T-shirt won't make your back hurt, but cheap shoes very well might.

The discount-store variety usually isn't made from real leather, which means your feet will sweat more, the shoes won't stretch to conform to your foot shape, and they'll also wind up stinkier than their natural-materials counterparts. If you just need shower shoes for the gym, then sure, pick up a pair of flip-flops at the dollar store. But if you're looking for something to wear all day, especially if you're on your feet much—and we know you are—go for quality over quantity.

TECHNOLOGY. Those $200 computers and $20 MP3 players may look like great deals, but when it comes to electronics, shopping bargain-basement is a bad idea. You'll get cheaper parts and usually slower customer service if something goes wrong.

About $700 is a good starting point for a desktop computer and monitor; anything below that, and you're probably looking at inferior hardware. With MP3 players, spring for one that has a flash drive, not a hard drive. They'll stand up much better to impact if you drop it—that is, when you drop it.

(Before you buy, check out the NEA Member Benefits Click & Save program

PHOTO: MEIKO ARQUILLOS

at www.neamb.com, which offers deals from tech companies like Dell, Panasonic, and Philips.)

CARS. The car that scored the highest of all on Consumer Reports' latest road tests is the $77,000 Lexus LS 460L. Now, we're not saying that's a smart buy on a teacher's salary! But spending a little more on a car makes sense if you do it for the right reasons, says Phil Reed, consumer advice editor for the automotive site www.Edmunds.com.

Upgraded stereo systems, leather seats, and sunroofs are the wisest splurges in terms of resale value, Reed says. He also strongly recommends paying extra for electronic stability control. "It could save your life and you may never even know it."

MEN'S SUITS. Even if you wear it just once or twice a year—the Teacher of the Year banquet, perhaps?—a more expensive suit will look better, wear better, and hold up longer. "The proof is in the wearing of the garment," says Doug Salmi, a merchandise manager for tailored clothing at Dillard's department stores.

High-end stores also offer sales people who can put you in the perfect fit, but check out local Goodwill or consignment stores for deals. You may be able to get the same fine-thread wool at prices that won't chill your bank account.

FURNITURE. When you think about how many times your couch will have to stand up to the force of your body weight flopping down after debate practice, it makes sense to invest in quality. That higher price tag will buy you a kiln-dried hardwood frame (as opposed to short-lived plywood and particle board) and cushions made with denser polyurethane, which won't sag as quickly as cheaper cushions. (If you'd still rather somebody else pay full price, check out www.Craigslist.com for used leather couches and more.)

Lest Suze Orman come knocking on our door at midnight: It's never wise to spend more than you can afford. But sometimes, being smart with your money means saying no to the cheapest option.

Gas up your wallet!

With the price of fuel soaring higher than its fumes, it's almost less painful to go to the dentist! To take the sting out of a trip to the gas pump, try some of these gas-saving strategies:

If you're the same person who flips through the Sunday circulars looking for the best prices on steak and eggs, you should do the same for gas. Check out www.gasbuddy.com to compare local prices or, for prices plus directions, try http://gasprices.mapquest.com.

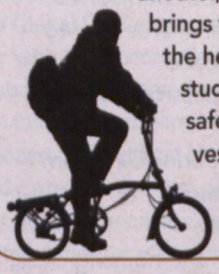
Once you hit the road, the most important thing you can do is obey the speed limit, says John Townsend, spokesman for Mid-Atlantic AAA. For every 5 mph that you drive over 60 mph, you may be losing about 30 cents per gallon in fuel efficiency. Also, take out all the junk in your trunk, use cruise control when possible, and avoid aggressive starts and brakes, he says. (Other AAA tips: Keep tires inflated and keep to a regular maintenance schedule.)

Ever heard of "hypermiling?" It describes drivers who attempt to exceed their vehicles' EPA fuel economy rating through specific driving habits. We certainly don't recommend all of them—coasting through stop signs? Tailgating? Coasting in neutral? No, no, and no! But other suggestions sound downright sensible, like turning off the A/C and removing unused cargo racks. For more information, go to www.cleanmpg.com.

PHOTOS: GAS CAN: NORMAN POGSON; SPEEDOMETER: LINUX PATROL; CAR AND DRIVER: THOMAS BARWICK; FRUSTRATED MAN: AKURTZ

HOW I... Save Money

Northern Virginia health teacher Will Smolinski has slashed his vehicle fuel bills by an average of $350 a month. How, you ask? He's going places on his own head of steam. Smolinski gave up his car last year and rides a bicycle to school, about three miles each way. For Smolinski, a triathlete, it's not much effort. But he encourages his colleagues to consider the same. For one thing, there's the money. For another, there's the sense of energy that he brings to his classroom in the morning, and the healthful behavior that he's modeling for students who "really respect it." To be safe, Smolinski always wears a reflective vest, and lights on the front and rear of his bike, plus a light on his backpack. And don't forget your helmet.



$64.82 Boo!

THE AMOUNT OF MONEY THAT THE AVERAGE CONSUMER SPENT ON HALLOWEEN-RELATED STUFF LAST YEAR, MOSTLY ON CAVITY-CREATING CANDY. NOW, THAT'S SCARY... AND IT'S UP FROM $59.06 THE YEAR BEFORE.

SOURCE: THE NATIONAL RETAIL FEDERATION

Buy Now or Later?

Technology expert Kevin Savetz weighs in.

what	APPLE IPHONE	HIGH-DEFINITION VIDEO CAMERA	FLAT-SCREEN HDTV	MP3 PLAYER
cost	$199-$299, plus data plan	$900-$1,100	$500-$4,000	$20-$350
about	"Early adopters" are still stinging from the iPhone's $200 price drop a mere two months after its first release. But the new iPhone 3G has become more than a sleek status symbol. Besides added memory, the 3G has GPS, longer battery life, access to an applications store, faster Web browsing, and improved phone clarity. (The bad news: Rates are going up.) If you're locked into a contract, you'll have to wait or pay to switch. If not, the functionality, intuitive touch screen, and lower cost make the iPhone a good bet.	Is it time to go high-def? It depends on how you use your camcorder. If you produce videos that will be broadcast or distributed in near-professional quality, high-def could be a good move. But if your projects are more casual or Internet-based—say, you're just uploading shorts to YouTube—high-def is just going to cost you more time in downloading, editing, and uploading. You could sacrifice picture detail and save $600 to $800 by buying a standard definition video camera.	When it comes to flat-screen high-definition TVs, the array of choices can be as overwhelming as deciding whether to watch McDreamy or *Meerkat Manor*. But with this kind of expense, it's important to do your research. Whether you go with LCD or plasma, the good news is industry experts predict prices will continue to drop through 2008, in part because retailers have more inventory than expected and manufacturers have themselves been dropping prices by hundreds of dollars.	Today, you can get a video MP3 player for what a bare-bones music player used to cost, so there's no need to wait any longer. Prices for portable media players have leveled out, and you can get a lot of bang for your buck—whether you go with the lure of Apple's iPod or a brand such as Archos or Creative's Zen. All can handle your song library and podcasts, while those equipped with video can display photos, replay TV shows, and more. Choose a player with enough memory so you won't need to upgrade.
verdict	Go for it.	Wait it out.	Buy now.	Buy now.

PHOTOS: BICYCLE: ACCENT; CHILD: PLUSH STUDIOS; IPHONE: ANDREY KOZACHENKO; VIDEO CAMERA: RONEN; PLASMA TV: MILEVSKI PETAR; MP3 PLAYER: SAIM NADIR

resources

53 **Grants & Awards** With Global Challenge Grants, high school students work with peers around the world on solutions to global warming and the future of energy.

54 **Youth Leaders for Literacy** Your students can become community leaders by participating in this NEA/Youth Service America grant program.

54 **In Print** 26 teens reveal what it's like to buck social pressure to be themselves.

54 **Books by NEA Members** A former Michigan Teacher of the Year shares how to create a caring classroom where everyone works together to succeed.

55 **Take Note** Register to receive free American art prints for your classroom from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

56 **On the Web** Why don't more girls go into engineering? EngineeringGirls.com is filled with facts and resources engineered to help girls think big.

57 **Diversity Calendar** October 8 is International Walk to School Day.

58 **Heads Up from NEA Member Benefits** Advice for dealing with the housing crisis, debt management, and more.

Need a Grant? The NEA Foundation Can Help (But Don't Wait Too Long)

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY OCTOBER 15, 2008, FOR BOTH THE *STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GRANTS* AND THE *LEARNING & LEADERSHIP GRANTS*.

THE NEA FOUNDATION
www.neafoundation.org

Since 1999, The NEA Foundation has awarded close to 2,000 individual grants to educators and teams of educators totaling over $5.9 million. There are two types of grants:

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GRANTS are $5,000 awards that promote classroom innovation to engage students in critical thinking and deepen their knowledge of standards-based subject matter.

LEARNING & LEADERSHIP GRANTS are $5,000 awards (for teams of educators) and $2,000 awards (for individuals) that support high-quality professional development opportunities, such as summer institutes, action research, collegial study, lesson study, and mentoring.

Applications are accepted throughout the year and are reviewed three times a year, beginning on February 1, June 1, and October 15. For the current cycle, recipients will be notified by January 15, 2009. Grants fund activities for 12 months from the award date. All practicing K–12 public school teachers, education support professionals, and higher education faculty and staff at public colleges and universities are encouraged to apply. Visit **www.neafoundation.org** for more information or call **(202) 822-7840**.

NEA HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS AWARDS

Every year, NEA directs a Human and Civil Rights Awards program to honor individuals and affiliates who stand up and defend human and civil rights. You're invited to help us keep the legacy alive and participate in the 43rd annual awards by nominating an individual, organization, colleague, or affiliate. Complete your nomination form online at **www.nea.org/annualmeeting/hcrawards/index.html**. Note these important dates:

December 10, 2008—Deadline to submit postmarked nomination forms to NEA Human and Civil Rights.

January/February 2009—Selection of awardees by the NEA Executive Committee, based on recommendations from the Human and Civil Rights Committee.

July 2, 2009—Awards Banquet, San Diego, California.

For more information, contact Sabrina Williams, NEA Human and Civil Rights, 1201 16th St., N.W., Ste. 616, Washington, DC 20036-3290, or send an email to **sawilliams@nea.org**.

2009 NATIONAL SCHOOLS OF CHARACTER AWARDS

The Character Education Partnership (CEP) annually recognizes 10 K–12 public and private schools and districts as National Schools of Character for outstanding work in character education.

Winners receive a financial grant as high as $10,000 based on the size of the school or district; the extensiveness of the winner's outreach plans; and available resources. Half of each grant is used to enhance the winner's program and send a team to present at the CEP Forum; the other half is used for outreach to other educators.

The criteria used to judge award winners is CEP's *Character*

Education Quality Standards. As part of the application process, applicants score themselves using this document. Completing the application process, therefore, is a rich opportunity to conduct a thorough self-assessment.

Applications for the 2009 awards are due by **December 8, 2008**. For more information, visit **www.character.org**.

TAKE THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE

Supported by the University of Vermont College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences and the National Science Foundation, the Global Challenge program allows high school students to partner with their peers abroad to create new solutions that address global warming and the future of energy.

International teams of four students ages 14–17 create both a business plan with an innovative solution to global climate change and a presentation that demonstrates each team member's understanding of the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics of their solution, as well as its global business potential. Students receive assistance in collaborating with overseas team members, as well as mentoring by University of Vermont students.

Up to $40,000 in college scholarships are awarded. Online registration is free and open year-round, however, there is a fixed activity schedule. In January, teams submit their ideas; the main activities run from September to April; solutions are judged in May; and prizes are awarded in June. **Registration is now available for the 2008–09 cycle**. For more, visit **www.globalchallengeaward.org**.

SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY AWARDS

Sponsored by Prudential Financial and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, this program recognizes students in grades 5–12 who demonstrate exemplary community service.

Schools may select one middle and one high school Local Honoree for every 1,000 students. In February 2009, 102 State Honorees will be selected from the 50 United States and the District of Columbia. Each state honoree will receive $1,000 and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., with one parent or guardian for the National Recognition events. At that time, 10 National Honorees will receive an additional $5,000 plus a $5,000 grant for a nonprofit charitable organization of their choice. Note these important dates:

November 7, 2008—Midnight CST postmark deadline for principals and official certifiers

February 2009—State honorees, principals, and official certifiers notified by mail

May 2–5, 2009—National recognition events in Washington, D.C.

Packets were mailed in August to every middle and high school across the country.

For more information, visit **www.principals.org/s_nassp/sec_inside.asp?CID=539&DID=48173**.

INTEL SCIENCE TALENT SEARCH

Each year, Intel conducts its precollege Science Talent Search (STS), a nationwide competition honoring outstanding young scientists who have completed original research projects. Applicants are judged by professional scientists on individual research, scientific originality, and creativity. The competition is open to all U.S. high school seniors. Students are encouraged to start their research as early as their freshman year and to participate in local science and engineering fairs before competing in the Intel STS.

Forty finalists will receive $5,000 from the Intel Foundation, a new laptop, an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., an opportunity to meet with government officials, and a chance to interact with leading scientists and display their research at the National Academy of Sciences. The grand prize winner will be awarded a $100,000 four-year scholarship. The second place winner receives $75,000, and the third place winner $50,000.

The deadline for entry is 8 p.m. ET, **November 19, 2008**. Visit **www.intel.com/education/sts/index.htm** for more information.

THE SEAWORLD/BUSCH GARDENS AWARDS FOR STUDENT AND EDUCATOR ENVIRONMENTALISTS

These awards recognize outstanding efforts of students and teachers working at the grassroots level across the country to protect and preserve the environment. This year, eight projects will be selected. Each winning group receives:

$10,000 to benefit the project

An all-expenses-paid trip for three students and one adult leader to an Anheuser-Busch theme park for an awards event

100 T-shirts to share with school and community partners.

From the eight projects, one outstanding environmental educator/leader will be recognized and receive:

A $5,000 award

An all-expenses-paid trip for him or her and one guest to an Anheuser-Busch theme park for an awards event

An all-expenses-paid trip to the 2008 National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) national conference.

All schools (grades K–12) in the United States are eligible to apply. All entries must be received by 5 p.m. on **November 28, 2008**. To learn more, go online to **www.seaworld.org/conservation-matters/eea/index.htm**.

PHOTO: STOCK.XCHNG

Stay Informed

Sign up for our monthly e-newsletter featuring grant information, literacy news, and more. It's easy: send a blank email to join-nea-raa-newsletter@list.nea.org.

Grants *from* NEA's Read Across America

READ ACROSS AMERICA IS MORE THAN A ONE-DAY CELEBRATION OF READING—IT'S YOUR READING RESOURCE ALL YEAR LONG!

Youth Leaders for Literacy is an initiative of NEA and Youth Service America (YSA) to help youth direct their enthusiasm and creativity into reading-related service projects. During the six-week program period and beyond, students create a groundswell of literacy service in communities across the country.

Young people age 21 or younger can apply for Youth Leaders grants, either individually or as a group. Grant applications should propose youth leadership in developing and implementing a literacy project that begins on NEA's Read Across America Day, March 2, 2009, and culminates on YSA's Global Youth Service Days, April 24–26. The proposal must include a scheduled activity (e.g., read-aloud session, trip to the library, bookmaking, etc.) for each week of the project period. Twenty grants of $500 each will be awarded, with winners announced in January 2009.

Go to **www.nea.org/readacross/volunteer** for more information, to obtain an application, and to read about previous winners. The deadline to apply is **October 26, 2008**.

NEA's Books Across America Library Books Awards are made in collaboration between NEA and The NEA Foundation. Approximately 50 grants of $1,000 are awarded to help public schools that serve economically disadvantaged students to purchase books for their school libraries. These awards are made possible with support from individuals like you, who donate to NEA's Books Across America fund. Originally created to help school libraries in the Gulf Coast region devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the program is now open to public school libraries around the country. (For more information, go to **www.nea.org/booksacross**).

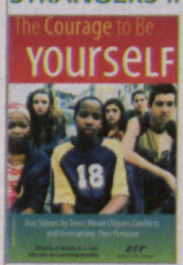
School libraries in need can apply for grants by visiting The NEA Foundation Web site at **www.neafoundation.org/grants.htm**. The deadline to apply is **November 20, 2008**.

In Print

JURASSIC BACKYARD

Third in a popular series, *Ivy + Bean Break the Fossil Record* by Annie Barrows and Sophie Blackall will delight beginning readers graduating to chapter books. Friends as different as night and day, Ivy and Bean are keen to break a world record—any record will do. When they find old bones, dreams of dinosaurs dance in their eyes, and the girls decide to earn fame and fortune by becoming the world's youngest paleontologists. Ages 4–8. 124 pp. $5.99 from Chronicle Books LLC. Go to www.chroniclebooks.com.

STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND



In *The Courage to Be Yourself*, edited by Al Desetta and Educators for Social Responsibility, teenagers write about how hard it is to be authentic in today's high schools, especially when they're bullied, pressured, excluded, and disrespected. The 26 essays cover issues that teens face daily: cliques, harassment, peer pressure, substance abuse, and violence—problems that often exist under the radar. In each instance, the writer finds strength to face conflicts and be who he or she really is. 145 pp. $13.95 from Free Spirit Publishing. Go to www.freespirit.com.

BOOKS BY NEA MEMBERS

BEST YEAR EVER! WINNING STRATEGIES TO ~~SURVIVE~~ THRIVE IN TODAY'S CLASSROOM

By Bill Cecil

The author, a former Michigan Teacher of the Year, has distilled 23 years of classroom experience in this guide to creating a successful classroom—an inspiring environment where there is trust among teachers, students, and parents; where there are no feelings of "us vs. them"; where all feel they have worth and respect; and where students work together to solve problems. 288 pp. $19.95 from Best Year Ever! Press. To order, go to www.BestYearEver.net.

THE SAND LADY: AN OCEAN CITY MARYLAND TALE

By Corinne Litzenberg

Travel back in time to the early 20th century as the magical Sand Lady takes a young girl on an old-fashioned summer vacation to Ocean City, Maryland—when boardwalks ruled, ice cream shops reigned, and a carousel gave kids the ride of their life. A lovely remembrance of time gone by. Ages 9–12. 32 pp. $14.95 from Schiffer Publishing Ltd. Go to www.schifferbooks.com.

PHOTO: STOCK.XCHNG

Take Note

FREE ONLINE LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

The NEA Health Information Network (NEA HIN) announces a new online training course on school indoor environmental quality (IEQ). This free, interactive course will aid NEA members and state Association staff in identifying, preventing, and resolving issues like mold, moisture, chemical exposure, asbestos, radon, and more. It covers the basics (including the negative consequences of poor IEQ, such as health problems and their impact on student and staff performance), common contaminants and hazards, and how to organize around the issue as a local Association.

You'll learn from expert speakers and your peers—other NEA members and state Association staff who have experience in dealing with IEQ issues. A school walkthrough and simulations will assist you as you begin to improve the IEQ in your school or district.

Professional development opportunities—including using credits towards salary increase, license renewal, or career advancement—will be provided.

To learn how to access the course, go to **www.neahin.org**. Questions? Contact Jennie Young at **jyoung@nea.org**.

BULLYING PREVENTION WEEK—OCTOBER 5–11

Sponsored by the PACER Center and cosponsored by NEA, the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, and National PTA, this weeklong event encourages communities to work together to increase awareness of the prevalence and impact of bullying on all children. A classroom tool kit with free downloads of daily activities, games, and contests is available online at **www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org**. The site aims to educate elementary students about bullying prevention and provide methods for responding to bullying situations. It features an animated cast of characters, information, celebrity videos, "Webisodes," games, animation, a contest, and other activities. Parents and professionals will find helpful tips, intervention strategies, and resources for use at home or school. A Web area for teens is in the works, and you can help by encouraging teens to submit videos, stories, poems, artwork, or audio clips expressing their ideas on bullying prevention.

FREE CLIMATE CHANGE CURRICULA

Climate Classroom, sponsored by the National Wildlife Federation, offers age and developmentally appropriate ways to address global warming in the classroom. It also provides resources and project ideas for parents, teachers, kids, and teens at school, at home, or in their community. Highlights include complete lessons and cooperative community projects aligned with established science teaching standards; resources for students to explore careers that will be critical to solving the problem of global warming; and engagement strategies for parents and children at home.

The Climate Classroom curricula are available free of charge at **www.climateclassroom.org**.

RECYCLE FOR YOUR SCHOOL

If you've been thinking about boosting recycling efforts at your school, check out Terracycle, a company that lets you earn money while you recycle. What do they pay for? Lots of stuff: used 20 oz. plastic soda bottles, yogurt containers, foil energy bar wrappers, and drink pouches. There is no cost to join the program, and every reason to participate. In addition to modeling good recycling practices for students, schools receive money for each item, as well as free prepaid mailing materials to ship the stuff to Terracycle. The used containers bypass the landfills and are "upcycled" into affordable, eco-friendly products, including organic cleaners and fertilizer, handbags, backpacks, and pencil cases. Any school or a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit can participate. For more, visit **www.terracycle.net**.

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK—NOVEMBER 16–22

The NEA's 87th annual American Education Week is an excellent time to bring everyone together in the community to help build great public schools. Daily events include:

Monday, November 17—National Open House Day
Tuesday, November 18—Take Your Parents to School Day
Wednesday, November 19—Education Support Professional Day
Thursday, November 20—Educator for a Day
Friday, November 21—Substitute Educators Day

We've developed a planning tool kit containing dozens of activity ideas, proclamations, public service announcements, media tips, artwork, and much more. Go to **www.nea.org/aew**, or contact Christiana Campos, NEA Public Relations, at **ccampos@nea.org**.

PICTURE AMERICA IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Picturing America is a free resource that helps teach American history and culture by bringing great American works of art to classrooms and libraries. At no cost, recipients receive a set of large, high-quality reproductions of 40 pieces of American art (each approximately 24" x 36") and an illustrated teacher's resource book with information about the artists and artwork and lesson ideas for all grade levels to facilitate the use of the reproductions in core subject areas. Delivery of these materials is scheduled for spring 2009.

All schools and public libraries in the United States and its territories that have not previously received Picturing America may apply through **October 31, 2008,** at **http://picturingamerica.neh.gov**.

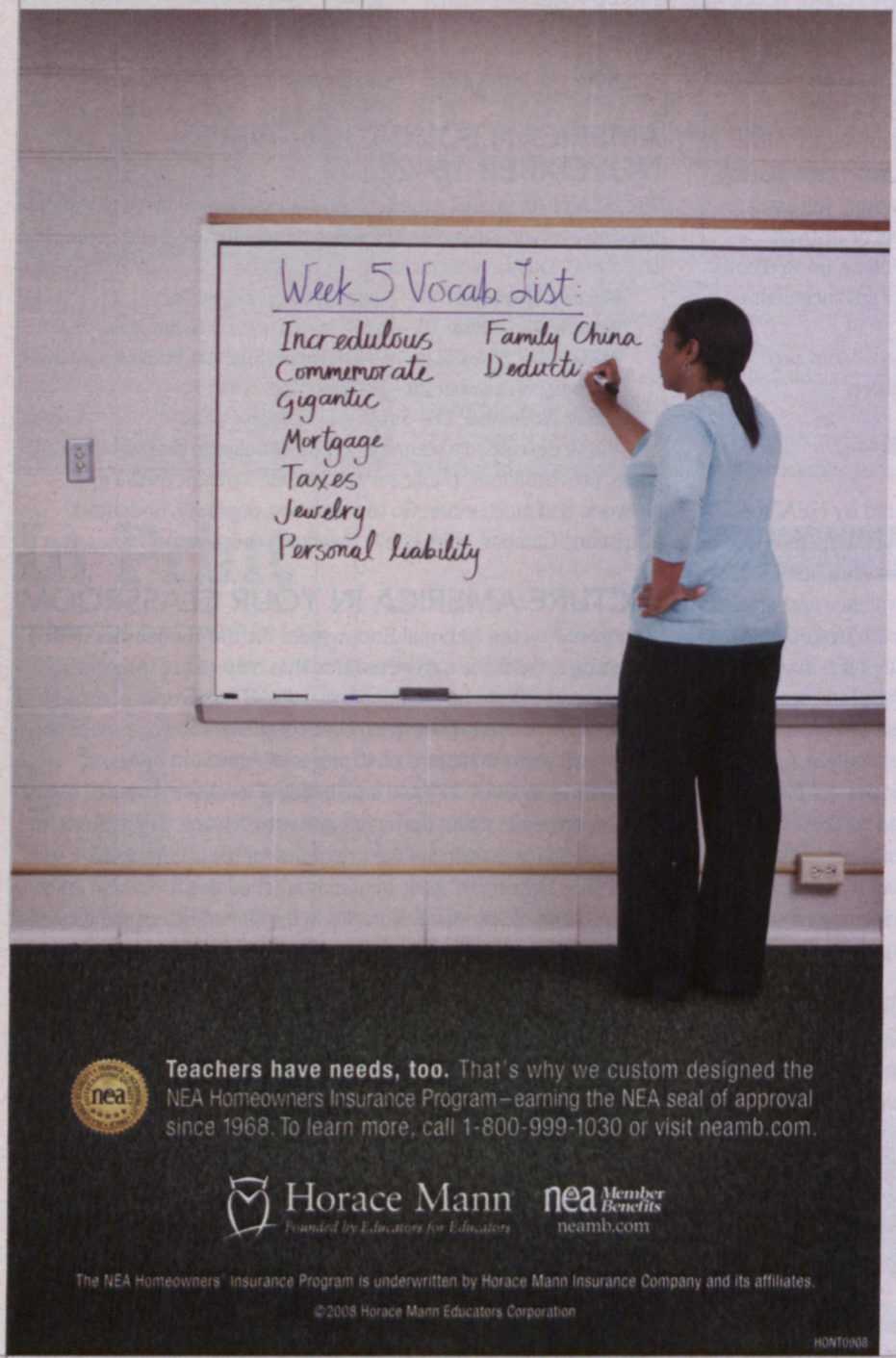
The Boating Party, Mary Cassatt, 1894

On the Web

CALLING ALL ENGINEER GIRLS

Why should girls become engineers? Engineers help solve important problems, like controlling and preventing pollution, developing new medicines, creating advanced technologies, even exploring new worlds. Engineers have significantly higher starting salaries than do college graduates with bachelor's degrees in many other fields. Engineers enjoy lots of options: they work in big cities and small towns, business offices or classrooms, factories or research labs, in the great outdoors or even in outer space! Some engineers go into medicine, law, business management, or policymaking. And then there's job security—people who solve problems and come up with new ways of thinking and doing things will always be in demand.

In short, all the reasons that influence boys to become engineers also apply to girls. Visit **www.engineergirl.com** to find out more about why engineering is a great choice for girls.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SCIENCE FRIDAY KIDS' CONNECTION

Every week during the school year, the Kids' Connection translates information from National Public Radio's award-winning *Science Friday* into curriculum for middle school teachers. Hosted by veteran science journalist and author Ira Flatow, *Science Friday* explores topics ranging from global warming to genetically modified foods. Each topic contains a summary with references, suggested questions for students, activities, and related Web resources. Educators can review the content in light of appropriate McREL standards listed on each topic and derived from the Mid Continent Research for Education and Learning. To learn more, visit **www.sciencefriday.com** and click on the "Teachers" link at the top.

RELIVE THE SPLENDORS OF IMPERIAL RUSSIA

Readers interested in Russian history will find themselves transported to the 1700s when they visit the rich, visually stunning Alexander Palace Time Machine, the Web's most popular site for Russian and Romanov history. Tour the Alexander Palace, home of the Romanovs, by way of photographs, plans, and written details of each of the rooms. Included are biographies, images of the inhabitants, and rooms as they were when occupied, and transcripts of diaries and letters. Other items relating to life at the end of Imperial Russia are maps, rare online books, recipes, antique car images, and travelogues. You can even listen to an Edison recording of "God Save the Tsar" or participate in discussion forums. Go to **www.alexanderpalace.org/palace**.

Diversity Calendar

OCTOBER

OCTOBER—CZECH HERITAGE MONTH
Celebrate the legacy of Americans of Czech descent and their many contributions to American culture. Visit www.czech.cz.

OCTOBER—POLISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH
Join millions of Polish Americans to celebrate their special month. Learn more at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish_American.

OCTOBER—ITALIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH
Honor the achievements, contributions, and successes of Americans of Italian descent. Visit http://italian.about.com/library/blniahmspecial.htm.

OCTOBER—GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER (GLBT) HISTORY MONTH
Visit www.nea.org/schoolsafety/glbt.html for information and resources on keeping schools safe from intimidation and harassment.

OCTOBER 2—ID AL-FITR
On this day, Muslims feast and celebrate the end of *Ramadan*.

OCTOBER 6—GERMAN AMERICAN DAY
Prost! Read about the history of Germans in America at http://usa.usembassy.de/garelations8300.htm.

OCTOBER 8—INTERNATIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL DAY
Whether your concern is safer streets, healthier habits, or cleaner air, Walk to School Day is aimed at encouraging a more walkable America. For more information, visit www.walktoschool.org.

OCTOBER 9—YOM KIPPUR
The most solemn day of the Jewish year, and one of the most important, the "Day of Atonement" is typically spent at synagogue in fasting, reflection, and prayer.

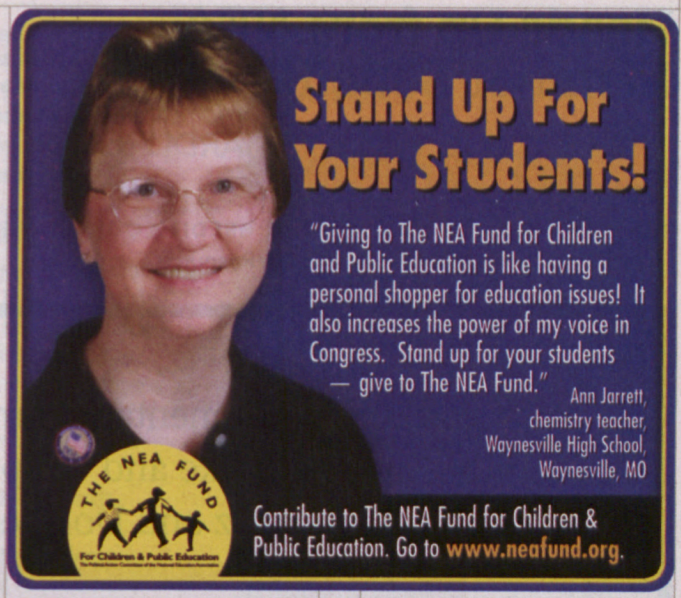
OCTOBER 12–18—TEEN READ WEEK
This year's theme is Books With Bite @ Your Library. For information, visit www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teenreading/trw/trw2008/index.cfm.

OCTOBER 19–25—NATIONAL INFERTILITY AWARENESS WEEK
This disease affects 7.3 million American women, however, about two-thirds of couples who seek treatment are able to have a baby. To find out more, visit www.resolve.org/site/PageServer?pagename=evt_niaw08_home.

OCTOBER 20—NATIONAL MULTICULTURAL DIVERSITY DAY
Celebrated on the third Monday in October, this day was adopted as a national event by NEA's 1993 Representative Assembly. See our Diversity Toolkit at www.nea.org/diversitytoolkit/index.html or share your ideas for teaching diversity on our discussion board at www.nea.org/cs/forum.jspa?forumID=55.

OCTOBER 20—BIRTH OF THE BÁB
Celebrated by millions worldwide, this day marks the birth in 1819 of Ali iMuhammad, prophet and founder of the Bahá'í faith. To learn more, visit the official Web site of the Bahá'í International Community at www.bahai.org.

OCTOBER 31—TRICK OR TREAT FOR UNICEF DAY
From trick-or-treating door-to-door to hosting fundraisers with their schools and communities, kids have collected more than $132 million for UNICEF. For information, including teacher materials, visit www.unicefusa.org/trickortreat.


Stand Up For Your Students!
"Giving to The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education is like having a personal shopper for education issues! It also increases the power of my voice in Congress. Stand up for your students — give to The NEA Fund."
Ann Jarrett, chemistry teacher, Waynesville High School, Waynesville, MO
THE NEA FUND
For Children & Public Education
Contribute to The NEA Fund for Children & Public Education. Go to www.neafund.org.

Teaching Research Spotlight
If you're interested in what the research says about your profession, visit NEA's online venue highlighting professional research on best practices in educational issues.
October's focus is on
Cooperative Learning
Learn more at www.nea.org/ref?octresearch

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

Heads Up from NEA Member Benefits

THE HOUSING CRISIS IS HARDLY OVER, BUT HELP IS AT HAND

THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR CREDIT COUNSELING (NFCC) operates a Homeowner Crisis Resource Center that works with individuals and families who may be in jeopardy of losing their homes. Certified housing counselors can help you assess your current risk and understand your options.

For immediate assistance, call the toll-free hotline at **1-866-845-2227** or go to **www.neamb.com/debtadvice** where you'll find information on dealing with the housing crisis, debt management, budgeting, and other important financial topics.

EVERYONE LOVES THE GREAT BUYS AT COSTCO, AND NOW NEA MEMBERS CAN SAVE EVEN MORE

PURCHASE A FIRST-TIME MEMBERSHIP to Costco and receive coupons for FREE products and other great savings valued at more than $40. Free merchandise could include photo processing, coffee—even a rotisserie chicken!

Already a Costco member? You may miss out on the new member coupons, but if you renew your membership on Auto Bill through your American Express card, you get two additional months of membership. Find out more by going to **www.neamb.com/costco**.

PROTECT YOUR 403(B) SUPPLEMENTAL RETIREMENT SAVINGS PROGRAM OPTIONS—GET INVOLVED!

RECENT IRS REGULATION CHANGES may cause your school district to limit your 403(b) program choices (and potentially eliminate your current 403(b) product provider) as of January 1, 2009. Educate yourself, your colleagues, and your local Association using the 403(b) Toolkit prepared by NEA Member Benefits. Go to **www.neamb.com/toolkit**—you might be able to influence your district to keep your options open!

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ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES

CAR RENTAL

NEA Car Rental Program®—nationwide discounts from **Hertz** and **Alamo**. Preferred member rates are yours when you reserve your rental car in advance from Hertz or Alamo. And, at most locations, NEA members also enjoy **free unlimited mileage**, no charge for a spouse driver, and additional coupon savings. For more information, visit us at **neamb.com/discount** or call 1-800-637-4636

CREDIT CARD

The **NEA RateSmart® Credit Card** is the perfect card for members who want to save money on finance charges. You could start saving on interest now with one of the lowest APRs available. Plus there's no annual fee and no balance transfer fees if balances are transferred when applying. For more information about the costs associated with the use of this card, or to apply, call NEA Financial Services at 1-888-758-7946. Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., ET.

NEA PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY

Whatever your role in education, the NEA Professional Library is your source for books, Read Across America promotional tools, NEA logo items, and great gift or giveaway merchandise. Items are available through our online store. Ordering is easy and secure! **www.nea.org/ books**. We continually update the site to reflect new items, specials, and highlight upcoming events. Visit often – you don't want to miss a thing!

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Need K-16 teachers all subjects. Over 10 countries plus hosting opportunities, 6 weeks-1 year. www.fulbrightexchanges.org

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Now your NEA membership is even more rewarding! Visit **NEA Click & Save**, a brand new program designed to save you time and money. **NEA Click & Save** provides you and your family with access to thousands of offers from brand name merchants, including Ann Taylor, Target, Panasonic, Land's End, and many others. As a member of **NEA Click & Save**, you will enjoy:

- **Special savings** on your favorite brands, along with offers tailor-made for you.
- Select **personalized email reminders** from your favorite merchants, and receive advance notice of upcoming sales and special events in your area.
- You may also **invite up to four family members** to open their own account and begin saving. For more information, visit **neamb.com/clickandsave**

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...a chance to win one of three **$100 Gift Cards from Shell!**

Alleviate the "pain at the pump" and use the card for a couple of tank fill-ups!

Just log onto the NEA Member Benefits Web Site at neamb.com
No purchase necessary.

Giveaway opens 12:00 am, ET, October 1, 2008, and ends 11:59 pm, ET, October 31, 2008.

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THE BODY FASCINATING

Dissecting carcasses, and even human cadavers, gets my students hooked on learning. BY HARRY HITCHCOCK

"IT'S AN ELECTIVE—MAYBE some will drop out." That's what I thought the first day, looking out at 29 students in an anatomy lab designed for 24.

So I pulled a deer head from the freezer and put it out to thaw.

The next day, Leslie took a bone saw and cut through the skull while all the kids gathered around, several deep, cell phone cameras in hand. A few moments later, the brain plopped out, Hayden passed out, but nobody dropped out. (Hayden was good to go the next morning.)

Leslie is a third-year student in my high school anatomy and physiology sequence. She has built clay models of the human musculature, dissected mammal carcasses, skinned a mammal for tanning, rebuilt its intact skeleton, and dissected human cadavers—twice!

Over 100 students—20 percent of my school's juniors and seniors—take anatomy. They learn about the musculoskeletal system using models, disease-free carcasses I get from trappers, and body parts from game processors.

> "Elyssa took the lens from a deer's eye and used it to read fine print."

About one quarter go on to physiology, where most of them work on a human cadaver. That requires parental permission and is entirely optional.

It all started five years ago, when I became enamored of dermestid beetles and bought a small colony. These insects are used to clean meat off small, fragile bones. My class and I used them to clean a dead hummingbird that a student had found. They were amazed at its delicate skeleton. We did a squirrel next, a snake, and a bullfrog that died while trying to swallow a squirrel.

Soon, I had old freezers full of beetles, and we were cleaning all manner of bones. Often, I would come to work and find a fresh road kill bagged and on my desk—courtesy of colleagues. Then I met a trapper who still gives me disease-free carcasses. Three years ago, we began working with larger carcasses and the kids built museum-quality skeletons such as coyote, bobcat, otter, and fox. They researched the natural history and the relationship of form and function via comparative anatomy.

Whitey Hitchcock and student **Austin Leedy** dissect a beaver carcass.

We do the cadaver dissections twice a year in a friend's lab at Pellissippi State Technical Community College.

All this takes money. We have raised over $40,000 for models, skeletons, carcasses, probes, and computer technology. Our community and administration and Oak Ridge Associated Universities have been extremely supportive.

When people hear about my work, "cadaver" grabs their attention, but that's not the essence of it. The essence is a safe room of active individuals learning what they are truly interested in—something they relate to in a deeply personal way. I tell them, "You have experienced all you see here. You eat, see, breathe, jump, your heart beats, your skin grows—here you can try to understand what makes it tick."

I hear: "What's this—the liver?" "The ovaries are so small!" "Look how these bones connect." No one sleeps.

I have watched Austin measuring the intestines from different animals to see whose is longest. Elyssa took the lens from a deer's eye and used it to read fine print. Erin and Austin removed an amniotic sac with beaver fetuses, and then "broke the water" themselves. The baby beavers went home with them in a jar. Another time, a local vet helped the kids "neuter" a coyote carcass on one side, and then do a vasectomy on the other.

Every stomach's content is examined.

What's the result? A thirst for knowledge, and the start of a lifetime of learning for my students. I have an enormous stack of letters saying, "I learned how to learn."

The secret formula for true learning is friends sharing a passion. I believe I will leave this life with many friends. I will also leave them my own gift as a cadaver.

Harry "Whitey" Hitchcock teaches at Clinton High School in Clinton, Tennessee.

PHOTO: WADE PAYNE

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